DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 409 244 SO 027 371

TITLE	Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads. Choices for the 21st Century. [Student Resource Book] and Teacher's Resource Book.
INSTITUTION	Brown Univ., Providence, RI. Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Inst. for International Studies.
PUB DATE	Sep 96
NOTE	79p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Choices Education Project, Watson Institute for International Studies, Box 1948, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912 ($12.00).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Learner (051) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Cross Cultural Studies; *Current Events; Developing Nations; Foreign Countries; *Foreign Policy; Global Approach; High School Students; High Schools; Instructional Materials; Latin American Culture; *Latin American History; Latin Americans; *Mexicans; Political Science; Social Studies; Teaching Guides; World Affairs; *World History
IDENTIFIERS	*Mexico

ABSTRACT

This student's resource book contains sources that bring Mexico's evolving national identity into sharper focus for U.S. high school students through utilization of a Mexican perspective. Students see the world through Mexican eyes and contemplate current Mexican choices in the areas of economic development, political reform, and foreign relations. At the core of the unit are three distinct directions, or futures, for Mexico in the coming years. Each future is grounded in a clearly defined philosophy about Mexico's place in the world and offers broad guidelines on fundamental Mexican public policy issues. By exploring a spectrum of alternatives, students gain a deeper understanding of the values and assumptions competing for the allegiance of the Mexican people. The background reading prepares students to assess Mexico's policy choices. Part 1 introduces students to the conflict and drama of Mexican history through a historical survey extending from the pre-Columbian period to the financial crisis of 1982. Part 2 analyzes the ramifications of the economic reforms Mexico has undertaken since 1982. Part 3 explores the most pressing public policy challenges facing Mexico today. A student "Focusing Your Thoughts" section and nine suggested student readings also are included. The accompanying teacher's resource book contains a suggested five-day lesson plan, a day-by-day lesson plan, and student activities. The unit opens with an analysis of the recent controversy revolving around the revision of elementary school history textbooks in Mexico. The next lesson centers on Mexico's rich tradition of mural painting to introduce students to the concerns of individual Mexicans. The third and fourth days of the lesson plan involves students in a simulation in which they act as advocates for three Futures or take on the role of Mexican voters. On the fifth day, students apply their own policy recommendations for Mexico to pressing constitutional issues. An "Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan" is also included. (CB)

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CHOICES FOR THE 21st CENTURY

Caught Between Two Worlds:
Mexico
At The Crossroads

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads was developed by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project staff with the assistance of the research staff of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, scholars at Brown University, and several other experts in the field. We wish to thank the following researchers for their invaluable input:

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To Nancy Soukup, editorial associate at the Watson Institute, we extend additional thanks for editing this unit.

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads is part of a continuing series on current foreign policy issues. A new unit is published every three months during the academic year, and all units are updated regularly.

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The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project develops curricula for high schools and colleges on current foreign policy issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project is a program of the **Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies** at Brown University.

Thomas J. Biersteker
Director

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THE CHOICES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION PROJECT is a program of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University. CHOICES was established to help citizens think constructively about foreign policy issues, to improve participatory citizenship skills, and to encourage public judgment on policy priorities.

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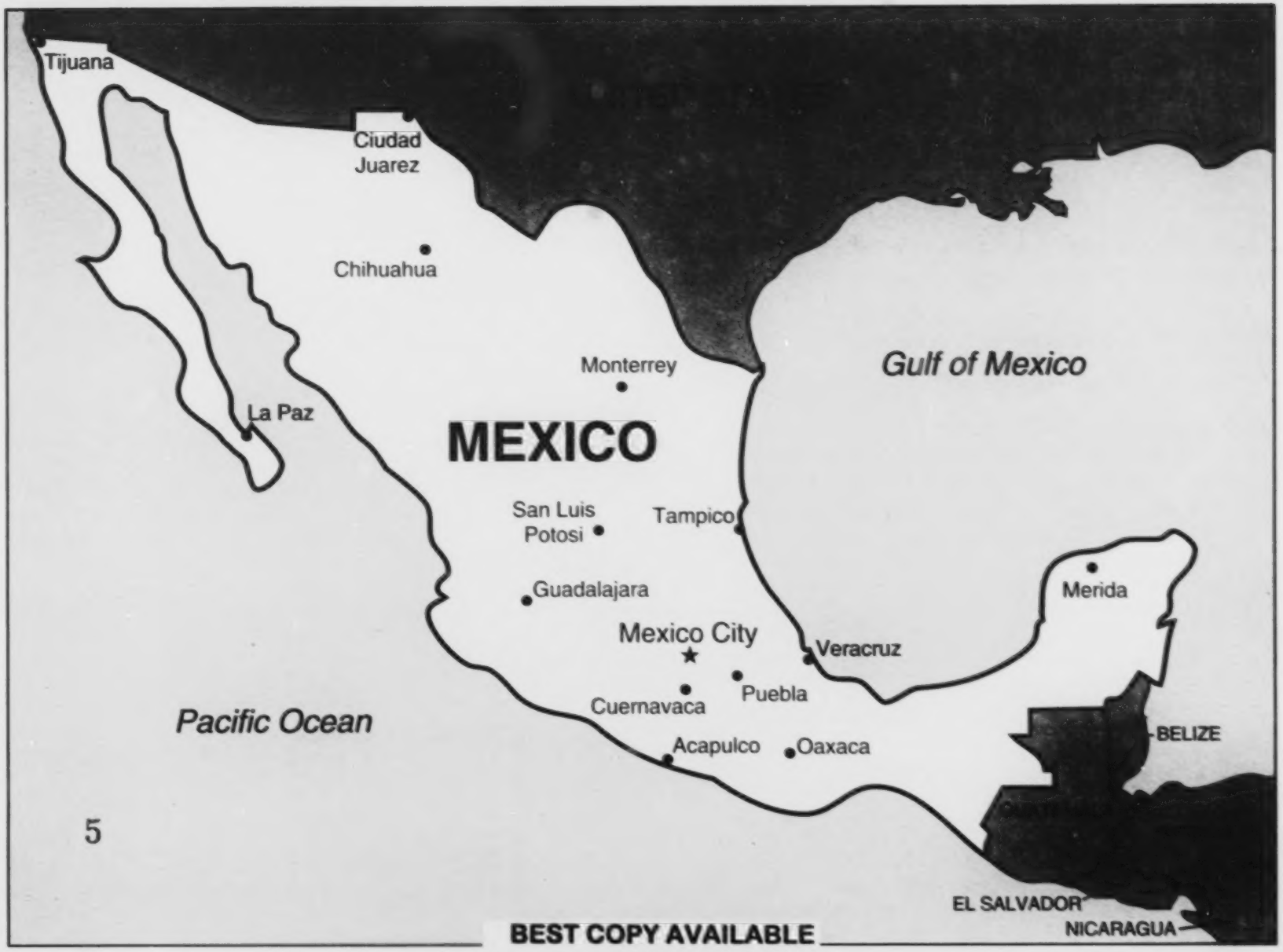

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Part I: Understanding Mexican History

On January 1, 1994, Mexico took a dramatic step toward a new era of progress and prosperity. On that day, the country officially joined the United States and Canada in forming the world's largest trading bloc, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

After nearly a decade of dizzying economic reform, Mexico seemed on the verge of breaking into the ranks of the wealthy, developed nations. Foreign investment was pouring into Mexico, the Mexican stock market was strong, and plans were underway to admit Mexico to the exclusive club of developed nations that make up the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Yet even as policymakers in Mexico City and international financial analysts were hailing Mexico's breakthrough, another Mexico was rumbling. In the remote state of Chiapas in southern Mexico, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation chose New Year's Day to launch its rebellion against poverty and injustice. Hundreds of peasant soldiers, their faces covered by black ski masks or red bandanas, surged out of the countryside. Although most carried weapons dating back to World War II, they managed to occupy several key towns and attack a regional military base.

International observers, as well as many Mexicans, were stunned by the paradox. The Mexico they had come to know was dominated by the gleaming skyscrapers of Mexico City and the high-tech factories of Monterrey. Suddenly, however, an image of turmoil and backwardness had burst forth from the jungles of Chiapas.

Yet, as most Mexicans understand, Mexico is a land of paradoxes. Mexico City's skyscrapers tower above vast shantytowns where millions live without running water in their homes. Workers in Monterrey's factories typically earn less than $2 an hour. At the same time, the guerrillas of Chiapas built a sophisticated communications network held together by the Internet and cellular telephones. Soon after their uprising began, they established a site on the World Wide Web (http://www.peak.org/~justin/ezln/ezln.html).

Crisis or crossroads?

Events since January 1994 have further muddied the picture of Mexico. An economic crisis, political turmoil, and corruption scandals have shaken confidence in Mexico's development. Many Mexicans who believed that their country was entering a new era now see only another cycle of false hope and disappointment. Others, however, find reasons for optimism in the change that has taken place over the past decade.

Since the mid-1980s, Mexico has undergone a striking transformation. Mexico's leaders have opened their country's economy to the outside world. In a sharp break with the past, they have lowered trade barriers and encouraged foreign investment. NAFTA has prompted Mexican manufacturers and farmers to focus on exports. Meanwhile, the agreement has raised fears that Mexican culture and independence will be crushed under the weight of U.S. influence.

Mexico at a Glance

Area:	*756,066 square miles*
Arable land:	*12%*
Population:	*92,000,000*
Life expectancy at birth:	*70 male, 77 female*
Per capita gross domestic product:	*$3,750*
Telephone lines per 1,000 people:	*67*
Motor vehicles per 1,000 people:	*116*

Politically, growing pressure for democracy is threatening the long-standing rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. Increasingly forceful demands for fair elections and a crackdown on official corruption are being channeled into opposition political parties and grass-roots movements. Not since the Mexican Revolution of 1910-20 has Mexico been gripped so tightly by expectations for change.

The direction of what some call Mexico's second revolution is unclear. Mexico is a country of many faces. One looks north to the power and affluence of the United States with a mixture of envy and admiration. One looks south to the other nations of Latin

America with a sense of leadership and uniqueness. And finally, one looks inward, reacting with both pride and unease at its rich, contradictory features.

Mexico's complex identity

Mexicans have long been troubled by the reflection they see in the mirror. Mexican society is marked by profound divisions: Indian and Spanish, rich and poor, city and countryside, north and south.

The fragmentation of Mexican society explains in part the uncertainty of Mexico's future direction. Americans are a diverse people too, but political ideals and economic opportunity have provided our country with a unifying bond. The shared values of democracy, the rule of law, and liberty have held us together as a nation.

In contrast, the identity of Mexicans stems from a common land and history. Mexico and the Mexican identity were born from a violent collision of cultures. The Spanish conquered what is today Mexico in the early 1500s, toppling the highly advanced Aztec empire and overwhelming the civilization of the indigenous peoples, or Indians.

The Spanish succeeded in imposing their culture on Mexico. Spanish became the dominant language and Catholicism was practiced throughout the country. The Spanish also gained economic control of Mexico, seizing vast tracts of land and drawing on the labor of local Indians.

Over the centuries, the intermingling of peoples and cultures produced a new nation that blended Spanish and Indian elements. The great majority of Mexicans today identify themselves as people of mixed, or *mestizo*, ancestry.

Nonetheless, the old divisions persist. The descendents of the Spanish conquistadors continue to control much of Mexico's land and wealth. At the opposite extreme, millions of Indians who have not entered *mestizo* society, such as those in the state of Chiapas, are among the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere. For members of Mexico's *mestizo* majority, the divisions are more complex. Within each lives both conquered and conqueror.

As Mexico approaches the 21st century, its citizens are inescapably torn by questions involving Mexico's future course. Mexicans are drawn both to the Western countries of North America and Europe, and to Mexico's own Indian past. The economic model of the United States offers promise, but Mexicans cling to their beliefs and traditions. Democracy is widely embraced, yet Mexicans fear that their country's divisions could explode in another cycle of violence.

Your assignment

In this unit, you will be asked to step into the shoes of Mexicans and consider Mexico's future. You will be confronted with the same questions that the people of Mexico are now debating: What principles should guide the development of Mexico's economy? How should Mexicans address their country's deep-seated inequality and poverty? How should Mexico define its relationship with the rest of the world, especially with the United States?

To prepare you for the challenge ahead, you will begin with a brief survey of Mexican history up to the early 1980s. Unlike most Americans, Mexicans remain closely connected to their nation's past. History is seen not only as a central element of their identity, but as a critical force in shaping Mexico's future. It is both an anchor and a constraint. As you read the first part of the background reading, look for historical lessons that Mexicans might turn to today.

The second part of the background reading examines the transformation that began in Mexico after the 1982 economic crisis. Special attention in this section is given to the economic reforms that have brought Mexico into the global marketplace and rocked the foundations of Mexico's political system. Finally, the third part of the background reading explores the major issues facing Mexico today.

Violent Birth

In the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Mexico City, a plaque in front of a 16th-century church contains the following inscription: "On August 12, 1521, heroically defended by Cuauhtemoc, Tlatelolco fell into the hands of Hernan Cortes. It was neither a triumph nor a defeat: it was the painful birth of the *mestizo* nation that is Mexico today."

The inscription reflects the mixed feelings that Mexicans have toward their country's origins. To a greater extent than any other country in the Western Hemisphere, Mexico celebrates its Indian past. The advanced civilizations that arose in the region centuries before Cortes landed hold a prominent place in Mexican history books.

The Olmecs, remembered mostly for their finely crafted jewelry and pottery, were the first noteworthy people, emerging around 1200 B.C. More significant were the Mayas, whose first city-states were built around 150 A.D. in what is today Guatemala. In the following centuries, the center of Mayan civilization extended north to the Yucatan Peninsula.

The rise of the Mayas occurred alongside the development of the first highland civilization based in the Valley of Mexico (the location of Mexico City). The construction of Teotihuacan, a city of 200,000 inhabitants, and several huge pyramids was the crowning achievement of what is considered the classical era of the region. The period, however, came to a mysterious end after 900, possibly due to drought.

The decline in central Mexico made way for the invasion of warrior tribes from the north. The Toltecs and later the Aztecs restored the Valley of Mexico as an imperial center. Tenochtitlan, located on an island in Lake Texcoco, rivaled the earlier wealth and glory of Teotihuacan. At the time Christopher Columbus landed in the New World in 1492, the Aztec empire stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific, reached as far south as present-day El Salvador, and contained 7 to 15 million people.

The Spanish conquest

Cortes had no idea what awaited him when he sailed west from Cuba in 1519 with 500 men and sixteen horses. News of the expedition, however, soon reached Moctezuma (or Montezuma), the Aztec emperor. Many historians believe that Moctezuma feared Cortes was Quetzalcoatl, a legendary Toltec king of the 10th century who the Aztecs believed would eventually return to reclaim his throne.

To honor the god-king, Moctezuma sent a mission bearing gifts of gold, silver, jade, and embroidered cloth to greet the Spanish. Cortes immediately realized that he had stumbled on a rich civilization and insisted on meeting the Aztec emperor in person.

The Spaniards marched toward the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, overwhelming resistance along the way. Cortes' cannons terrified his foes. More important were his horses — animals unknown in the New World. Cavalry gave Cortes the advantage of speed and maneuverability in open areas.

The rulers of one of the city-states that had clashed with the Spanish, Tlaxcala, allied themselves with Cortes. Cortes was also aided by a young woman, Malinche, given to him by a local chieftain. Malinche quickly learned Spanish and served as Cortes' interpreter. She later bore him a son.

The Spanish and Tlaxcalans entered Tenochtitlan without opposition. Cortes was awed by the splendor of the Aztec court, and for several

An Aztec carving of Quetzalcoatl and Mictlantecuhtli, the god of death.

Reprinted from *A History of Mexican Mural Painting*

weeks he was hosted lavishly by Moctezuma. Cortes, however, feared a trap. Without warning, he arrested the Aztec emperor. Moctezuma, still uncertain of Cortes' identity and motives, did not resist. Instead, he opened his magnificent treasures of jewelry and art to the Spanish, hoping that they would take what they wanted and leave.

Meanwhile, the Spanish governor of Cuba learned that Cortes had disobeyed his orders and sent 1,000 soldiers to arrest him. Cortes gathered a force of 200 men and headed east to confront the governor's troops. After capturing the commander of the expedition, Cortes persuaded the troops to join him in conquering Tenochtitlan.

In the Aztec capital, however, the uprising that Cortes feared had taken place. The rebellion had been sparked when the Spanish force in Tenochtitlan had massacred thousands of participants in an Aztec religious festival. Cortes re-entered the city to find his troops besieged by a hostile mob. He ordered Moctezuma to bring a halt to the uprising. The outrage of the Aztecs, however, could not be quelled, even by the emperor. Moctezuma was struck in the head by a stone thrown from the crowd.

For the first time, the Aztecs fought back in earnest. In close quarters, the Spanish cavalry and cannons proved ineffective. Cortes was forced to abandon the island city of Tenochtitlan, losing half his army in the retreat across the water.

Cortes fought his way back to the territory of his allies, the Tlaxcalans. There, he regrouped his army. New Spanish expeditions from Cuba and other Spanish bases in the Caribbean supplied him with troop reinforcements and weapons. Cortes also built new alliances with local city-states resentful of Aztec rule.

At the same time, Tenochtitlan was still reeling from its first encounter with the Spanish. Moctezuma had died and been replaced with Cuauhtemoc, a young, inexperienced noble. More significant, the Aztec capital was devastated by a plague of smallpox brought by the Spanish.

The final defeat of Tenochtitlan was among the fiercest battles in the European conquest of the New World. In May 1521, Cortes ringed the shores of Lake Texcoco with his troops. Spanish and Indian soldiers surged along the causeways toward Tenochtitlan. The Aztecs repulsed most of Cortes' attacks, but the invaders managed to gain a toehold on the island. The arrival of thirteen Spanish warships, transported overland piece by piece, allowed Cortes to pound the Aztec defenses with heavy cannons.

Slowly, Cortes extended his control over Tenochtitlan in bloody, house-to-house fighting. In the end, hunger and disease took an even greater toll on the Aztecs than Spanish weaponry. In August, with most of Aztec nobles dead, Cuauhtemoc surrendered.

For God and king

The battle of Tenochtitlan represented much more than a military defeat for the Aztecs. The Spanish imposed their religion and culture on the empire. Tenochtitlan was demolished and Mexico City was founded on its ruins. Cuauhtemoc was hanged under Cortes' orders. Even Cortes' Indian allies eventually fell under Spanish rule.

The Spanish conquest was extended beyond the Aztec capital largely by the Catholic Church and Spanish landowners. In 1542, the Spanish authorities decreed that the Indians could not be held as slaves. Legally, however, they were regarded as minors who required the spiritual guidance of Catholic clergymen. Spanish missionaries converted entire villages and set up new communities centered around Catholic churches. The Indians supplied the labor and artistry to build Mexico City and other important settlements of what was known as New Spain. The stone for many of the colony's finest churches and palaces came from Indian temples and pyramids.

The Indian work force was also the economic basis for Mexico's haciendas — huge grants of land given mostly to officers in the Spanish army. In some cases, the Indians leased land from the Spanish landowners, turning over a portion of their crops as rent. In other cases, Indians from nearby villages worked the hacienda fields during the planting and harvest seasons. The spread of the hacienda system exposed more Indians to the diseases of the Old World. Without a natural immunity to protect them, up to two-thirds of Mexico's Indians died in the 16th century.

Mexico was Spain's richest colony in the New

Reprinted from *A History of Mexican Mural Painting*

Muralist Diego Rivera's interpretation of the Spanish conquest.

World during the 17th and 18th centuries. Its wealth, however, was based almost entirely on silver, gold, and crops grown for export. Otherwise, the Spanish did not encourage economic development. Manufacturing and independent trade were officially prohibited. Moreover, the royal court in Madrid was suspicious of the new political ideas that were circulating in the North American colonies and France in the late 1700s. (Mexicans refer to the people of the people of the United States as "North Americans.")

From New Spain to Mexico

Despite Madrid's tight control, the colony of New Spain had begun to set its own direction by the early 1800s. Mexico City had become a sophisticated city of 100,000 people. Overall, Mexico's population had increased to 6 million people from a low of 2 million in the 16th century. Local industries sprang up in defiance of Spain's ban on manufacturing. Increasingly, Mexico's native-born elite, known as *criollos*, came to resent the power of Spain.

The success of the North American colonists in winning independence from Britain and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 served as models for many *criollo* intellectuals. Their opportunity to break away from Madrid came in 1808, when France's Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Spain.

Mexico's independence struggle, however, did not begin in the colony's political and commercial hub. Instead, a parish priest in a small town 120 miles northwest of Mexico City, Miguel Hidalgo, was the first to take up arms against Spanish rule.

Speaking from his church pulpit in 1810, Hidalgo called on his mostly Indian and *mestizo* congregation to regain their land and freedom from the Spanish. His rallying cry, known among Mexicans as *"el grito,"* raised the banner of revolution. Hidalgo organized an army of 20,000 soldiers, equipped mostly with machetes and shovels. Hidalgo's forces attacked Spanish officials and landlords, often executing prisoners on the spot and turning ownership of the land over to the peasants who farmed it. Within a year, however, Hidalgo himself was captured and executed.

> *Will you make the effort to recover from the hated Spaniards the lands stolen from your forefathers 300 years ago?*
>
> *—Father Miguel Hidalgo*

Another parish priest, Jose Maria Morelos, carried on Hidalgo's rebellion south of Mexico City. In 1813, he convened a popular assembly that declared Mexico's independence from Spain. The following year, Morelos unveiled a constitution for Mexico that drew heavily on the principles of the French Revolution.

He too was executed by the Spanish.

Events in Europe also turned against the rebels. In 1814, Spanish guerrillas forced the French out of Spain and King Fernando VII returned to his throne. Fernando sent reinforcements to Mexico to reassert Spanish rule. In South America, Jose de San Martin and Simon Bolivar successfully led independence forces against the Spanish, but in Mexico most of the remaining rebel leaders were hunted down and shot.

Ultimately, political turmoil in Spain finalized Mexico's break with the mother country. In 1821, reform-minded Spanish generals forced King Fernando to accept a liberal constitution. Many within Mexico's *criollo* elite, as well as church leaders, feared that the reforms threatened to overturn the old social order. With the blessing of the Spanish authorities in Mexico, they joined forces under Agustin de Iturbide to develop an independence plan to preserve their privileges. In 1821, Spain's viceroy (the representative of the king) officially recognized Mexico's independence.

Unsteady independence

On September 27, 1821, Iturbide's 16,000-man army was greeted by cheering crowds and martial bands as it marched into Mexico City. In reality, there was little to celebrate. Mining, agriculture, and industry had all suffered during the long war. As many as 600,000 people had been killed in the independence struggle, and Mexico remained deeply divided. Iturbide, who crowned himself Emperor Agustin I, was executed in 1824.

Independent Mexico's infancy proved chaotic. Fifty governments were formed in Mexico's first three decades of existence. Eleven of them were headed by Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, the most powerful political figure of the era. Like other regional strongmen and large landowners, Santa Anna profited from the chaos. With a small army under his command in Veracruz, Santa Anna pulled the strings of power in Mexico City. At the same time, he and other wealthy Mexicans kept the central government weak and ineffective by refusing to pay taxes.

Mexico paid a high price for its instability. Both U.S. officials and North American settlers sensed that Mexico lacked the strength to hold onto its sparsely populated territories north of the Rio Grande. (The land today comprising the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas was incorporated into New Spain in the 1700s.) As settlers streamed into Texas, they increasingly clashed with Mexican authorities over land rights, slavery, and tax issues.

In 1836, Santa Anna personally led a 6,000-man army into Texas to punish North American settlers who had overrun a Mexican garrison. In a thirteen-day battle in San Antonio, he overcame the resistance of 200 North Americans defending a fortress known as the Alamo. Two months later, however, Santa Anna himself was captured by the North Americans. In exchange for his life, he agreed to recognize Texas' independence.

In fact, the confrontation between Mexico and the United States was far from over. Mexico's Congress rejected Santa Anna's agreement, while in Washington pressure mounted to grant Texas statehood. A full-scale war broke out in 1845 when the U.S. Congress admitted Texas into the union.

The Mexican-American War (known among Mexicans as the North American Intervention) exposed Mexico's shortcomings. Although outnumbered in most battles, the U.S. invaders achieved victory thanks largely to superior artillery and leadership. Mexican armies were pushed back on every front. Most humiliating was the relentless march of a 10,000-man U.S. force from Veracruz to Mexico City, roughly following the route of Hernan Cortes. In 1847, the North Americans defeated a volunteer army assembled by Santa Anna. Six young Mexican cadets died in a last stand defending the magnificent palace at Chapultepec against the U.S. forces.

Even as Mexico City fell, several regional commanders launched a guerrilla campaign to wear down the North Americans. In the Yucatan peninsula, they equipped a largely Mayan Indian army to resist U.S. forces. Mexico's leaders, however, feared the disintegration of their country after the Mayans turned their weapons on local landowners. To restore Mexico's stability, the government signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. In exchange for $15 million, Mexico surrendered half its territory to the

United States. The Mexican leadership then helped Yucatan landowners crush the Indian rebellion. In what is known as the War of the Castes, nearly half the Mayan population was killed in two years of fighting.

Liberal reform

Defeat at the hands of the United States shattered the confidence of Mexico's ruling class. Many questioned their country's cultural foundations, blaming Mexico's Spanish heritage and Catholicism for the loss to the largely Protestant, Anglo-Saxon society of the United States.

The outcome of the war boosted the fortunes of Mexico's Liberal Party. Mostly urban and middle class, the Liberals believed that the United States could serve as a model for reforming Mexico. They faced strong opposition from conservatives, particularly large landowners and high-ranking officials in the church and the military. In the 1850s, the political struggle frequently spilled over into violence. The focal points were a radical new constitution and its forceful advocate, Benito Juarez.

At a time when Mexican politics were dominated almost entirely by *criollos* from prominent families, Juarez was an oddity. He was a Zapotec Indian, orphaned at a young age and brought to the city of Oaxaca as a servant. Juarez's natural intelligence earned him a spot in a local school and eventually a law degree. He was elected to Congress and became governor of Oaxaca after the Mexican-American War.

The constitution proclaimed in 1857 reflected the dedication of Juarez and his fellow Liberals to the rule of law. The constitution's Liberal authors aimed to expand individual rights and limit the privileges of the Catholic Church. The political issues raised by the proposed reforms, however, were largely lost in a civil war between liberals and conservatives. To undermine his enemies and raise money for the liberal cause, Juarez in 1859 placed the property of the church under state control. In early 1861, he was able to enter Mexico City to assume the presidency.

Mexico's civil war again left the country vulnerable to foreign intervention. Britain, Spain, and the United States all took an interest in the conflict, but France proved the most ambitious. In 1862, as civil war raged in the United States, France sought to conquer Mexico. The French suffered a stinging defeat at Puebla on May 5 — a date Mexicans continue to celebrate today — but they soon reinforced their army. In 1863, they drove Juarez's government out of Mexico City and installed an Austrian prince, Ferdinand Maximilian, as emperor.

The French failed to establish their authority far beyond Mexico City. Guerrillas loyal to Juarez overran one French outpost after another north of the capital. The United States also lent support to the liberal cause after the end of the U.S. Civil War in 1865. By 1867, the French had withdrawn most of their troops, and the foundations of their Mexican empire crumbled. The last act occurred in Queretaro, where Juarez's forces captured Ferdinand Maximilian after a lengthy siege. The Austrian prince, who himself shared many of the liberals' convictions, was executed.

Juarez's return to the presidency was marked by an energetic program to modernize Mexico. With the country's schools no longer under the control of the church, Juarez reorganized the educational system. He also sought to expand foreign trade by building a railroad from Mexico City to Veracruz.

Ironically, the roughly 6 million Indians who continued to live in their traditional communities — about one-half of Mexico's population at the time — were hit hard by Juarez's reforms. Juarez intended to nudge Mexico's Indian peasants out from under the protective wing of the church. He strove to cut their ties to the communal lands held by Indian villages and transform them into independent small farmers. Instead, the break-up of the communal lands left the Indians more vulnerable than ever. Large landowners and speculators robbed them of much of their land, often by force.

Juarez died of a heart attack in 1872, leaving a void in Mexican politics. The vacuum was soon filled by another strong figure, Porfirio Diaz. Diaz, a *mestizo* from Juarez's home region of Oaxaca, had gained fame fighting against the French. After twice losing presidential elections to Juarez, Diaz seized power in 1876. He stepped down in 1880, reclaimed the presidency in 1884, and then held onto the office until 1910.

Diaz's motto was "little politics, much administration." There was no room for opposition during the dictatorship Mexicans call the *"Porfiriato."* Diaz, however, brought his country a level of stability it had not known since independence. He followed through on the program of economic modernization begun under Juarez. Twelve thousands miles of railroad were laid and new ports on the Atlantic and Pacific were built. For the first time, Mexico attracted large-scale foreign investment. Mining boomed, especially when an American team discovered oil along the Gulf of Mexico in 1901. New industries gained a foothold and agricultural exports rose.

Diaz's rule deepened the tremendous gulf between the rich and the poor in Mexico. By the turn of the century, 3,000 families owned half the country's wealth. The estate of the Terraza clan in Chihuahua equaled the size of New Jersey. Theft of Indian land accelerated, pushing millions of peasants into hopeless debt. Moreover, foreigners played an increasingly large role in the Mexican economy. Of Mexico's 170 largest companies, 130 were controlled by foreigners (mostly North Americans) in 1910. Many of Mexico's most productive mines and oil fields were in foreign hands. The growing presence of outsiders was an outgrowth of Diaz's policy of promoting investment by allowing foreigners to own the mineral rights to Mexican land. Foreigners had a substantial stake in Mexico's banks and railroads as well.

Revolution and Modernization

Among those who did not reap the rewards of the *Porfiriato,* resentment built to explosive levels. In the cities, Mexico's growing middle class was increasingly taking up the cause of democratic reform. Meanwhile, the poverty in the countryside was driving millions of peasants to the point of desperation.

Diaz provided the spark that brought about his downfall. In 1910, he withdrew his pledge not to run for re-election. Mexico's reformers responded by nominating Francisco Madero for the presidency. Diaz had rejected Madero as a running mate, but when the young author began drawing large, enthusiastic campaign crowds Diaz ordered him to be arrested.

Madero was released after the election and soon fled to Texas. From a hotel room in San Antonio, he plotted an uprising against the Diaz regime. Madero's revolt, erupting exactly a century after Hidalgo's call to arms, collapsed within a few hours. Madero's commitment, however, inspired a new round of protests. In northern Mexico, Francisco "Pancho" Villa and Pascual Orozco raised a rebel army, attracting hundreds of government troops to their ranks. In the state of Morelos, much closer to Mexico City, Emiliano Zapata organized peasants and sugar industry workers into the Liberating Army of the South. Within weeks, Zapata's mostly Indian soldiers forced the thirty families who controlled Mexico's sugar belt to flee in panic.

Finally, Madero's supporters in Mexico City demanded Diaz's resignation. The old dictator ordered his troops to open fire on the demonstrators, but his advisers soon persuaded him to resign and leave the country. In June 1911, Madero entered Mexico City in triumph. He and his fellow reformers believed that their liberal revolution had succeeded. In reality, the revolution had only begun.

Land and liberty

Conflict between Madero and Zapata was inevitable. Madero, the son of a wealthy landowner, hoped to rekindle the liberal reforms of Benito Juarez. Zapata, a peasant of *mestizo* background, was determined to reclaim the land that had been stolen by large landowners. Madero initially persuaded Zapata to lay down his arms in exchange for a promise of land reform. Zapata, however, would not give up the land that his forces had occupied. Madero soon called on the army to attack the rebels, and Zapata resumed the fight for revolution.

Madero also faced opposition from conservatives. Leading voices within the army, the bureaucracy, the church, the business community, and the U.S. embassy suspected his motives. They united behind General Victoriano Huerta, who had been responsible for containing Zapata.

In February 1913, Huerta executed Madero and claimed the presidency. Huerta's ruthlessness brought the revolutionaries together, if only briefly.

New armies in northern Mexico were formed and advanced quickly toward the capital.

In the United States, President Woodrow Wilson rejected Huerta with contempt and imposed an arms embargo on his regime. U.S. involvement, however, backfired, leading to a clash with Mexican troops in Veracruz and rallying support for Huerta in Mexico. Nevertheless, Huerta was forced to flee the country in July 1914.

Without a common enemy, the divisions among the revolutionary commanders re-emerged. A revolutionary convention in October 1914 brought the opposing viewpoints into the open, making it clear that land reform was the main point of contention. Zapata and Villa favored turning over the land of the haciendas to the peasants. Their plan, however, was rejected by Venustiano Carranza and his able general, Alvaro Obregon, the leaders of the revolution's most powerful military force.

While the armies of Carranza and Obregon camped outside Mexico City, Villa and Zapata marched their troops into the capital. Zapata's men — mostly Indians clad in heavy white cloth and huge sombreros — were bewildered by the big city. Zapata soon withdrew them to Morelos. In contrast, Villa's frontier troops from the north terrorized the capital with their pistols and heavy drinking. Villa cared little for developing a practical program to carry out the goals of revolution. Within a few weeks, he had turned most of Mexico City's liberal reformers against him and had plunged the capital into anarchy.

In January 1915, Carranza declared himself president. Villa had by then withdrawn his troops from Mexico City, allowing Obregon to occupy the capital. For the next five years, the rivalries among Carranza, Obregon, Villa, and Zapata were to result in the bloodiest fighting Mexico had seen since the Spanish conquest. Obregon, held the military balance of power. He learned the lessons of the trench warfare that was taking place in Europe at the time, equipping his army with machine guns and barbed wire. In the spring of 1915, Obregon cut Villa's proud cavalry to pieces in a key battle at Celaya, northwest of Mexico City.

Another one of Carranza's generals, Pablo Gonzalez, launched a campaign to defeat Zapata in 1916. For three years, his troops burned and pillaged Zapata's home state of Morelos in a brutal attempt to undercut the guerrilla leader's support. The peasants of Morelos, however, remained loyal to Zapata and continued to fight back against Gonzalez. Zapata was finally ambushed and killed in 1919 in a treacherous plot set up by Gonzalez.

Apart from the main military confrontations, Mexico was torn by aimless violence from 1911 to 1920. Small bands of armed men roamed the countryside, often killing and looting in the name of the revolution. At least 1 million Mexicans died before order was restored.

Bringing order to chaos

A first step toward stability took place in 1917, when a new constitution was proclaimed. The document reflected the long-standing desire for land reform, wider economic opportunity, and responsible government.

The constitution's authors — mostly teachers, lawyers, bureaucrats, engineers, and other members of the middle class — were determined to wrest power away from large landowners, foreign businessmen, and the church. They wanted to prevent another dictator along the lines of Porfirio Diaz from re-emerging, yet recognized that Mexico needed strong central government. To address their concerns, the constitution's authors concentrated authority in the hands of the president, but prohibited re-election.

As expected, Carranza was elected president under the new constitution in 1917. Most Mexican politicians assumed that he would endorse Obregon as his successor in 1920. Carranza, however, nominated Mexico's ambassador to the United States, Ignacio Bonillas, to run for the presidency. Obregon rebelled, chasing a panicked Carranza from Mexico City. (Carranza was killed on the way to Veracruz in May 1920.)

With the election of Obregon in 1920, Mexico finally had a strongman capable of imposing order. Over the next four years, Obregon put down several rebellions, built a new consensus among the leading forces of the revolution, and patched up relations with the United States. He also turned over power to his

successor, Plutarco Elias Calles, on friendly terms.

Calles, who like Obregon had served as a revolutionary general under Carranza, sped up the program of modernization. He established Mexico's first income tax to raise money for education, health care, and economic development. He also took a harsh stance toward the Catholic Church. When Calles required in 1926 that priests be licensed by the government, a Catholic rebellion erupted. The rebels fought under the rallying cry "Long Live Christ the King!" Calles responded ruthlessly, ordering the army to massacre the rebels and hang priests. Churches were not allowed to reopen until 1929.

Calles amended the constitution to extend the presidential term to six years and permit his ally Obregon to again run for office in 1928. Obregon was elected, but a few days later was assassinated by a Catholic militant while celebrating his victory. Calles left the presidency at the end of his term, but he continued to exercise dictatorial control over Mexico until 1935 from his mansion in Cuernavaca.

The main instrument of Calles' power was the National Revolutionary Party. Calles created the party to unite the hundreds of political movements that had arisen during the revolution. All those associated with government, from cabinet ministers to state governors to low-level bureaucrats, were brought in as members. To seal the marriage between party and government, the National Revolutionary Party adopted the green, white, and red colors of the Mexican flag as its symbol.

> *Freedom, equality, justice, effective suffrage, no re-election, separation of power, free municipalities, sovereignty of the state, international independence...words, words, words.*
>
> *—Luis Cabrera, leading contributor to the Mexican Constitution*

Cardenas' reforms

Frustration with Calles' heavy-handed tactics was growing when the National Revolutionary Party held its convention in 1933. Sensing the need for change, Calles picked the governor of Michoacan, Lazaro Cardenas, to run for the presidency. Calles hoped that Cardenas' youth and energy would revive the party. The *"jefe maximo"* (big boss), however, got more than he bargained for.

Cardenas was a man of high moral character and unbreakable will. During the revolution, he was an effective, disciplined military commander. He later gained notice for turning down bribes while serving in Mexico's oil fields. During the presidential campaign, Cardenas toured Mexico's poorest areas, often travelling to remote villages by horseback. After his election, he moved out of the lavish presidential residence in Chapultepec Palace.

Calles assumed that he would be able to dominate Cardenas as he had dominated previous presidents. Instead, Cardenas set his own course. When a showdown with Mexico's strongman came, Cardenas replaced top officials and military commanders loyal to Calles. In 1936, he sent Calles into exile aboard a plane bound for Texas.

Cardenas is remembered most for his land reform program. Article 27 of the 1917 constitution asserted the right of Mexico's peasants to land. The issue, however, was largely neglected until Cardenas' presidency. Cardenas' reforms involved the redistribution of 46 million acres of land (12 percent of Mexico's total territory). Cardenas created 180,000 *ejidos*, or farming communities based on the agricultural traditions of the Indians. The state owned the land of the *ejidos* but gave peasants the right to use it.

Cardenas also took on foreign companies in Mexico. In 1937, he imposed state ownership over foreign railroad companies. More important, Cardenas nationalized Mexico's oil industry, which was mainly in North American and British hands. Oil had long been a focus of Mexican nationalism. At the peak of output in 1921, Mexico produced one-quarter of the world's oil, yet the industry was run almost completely by foreign companies.

Cardenas' popularity soared after the nationalization of the oil industry. The oil companies struck back by boycotting Mexican petroleum products, but U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ruled out stronger action. Ultimately, the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939 drew Mexico closer to the United States and Britain.

Economic growth and stability

World War II set the stage for a long stretch of economic growth in Mexico. With the United States and its allies hungry for food and raw materials, Mexican exports boomed. At the same time, Mexican industries increased production to replace imports from abroad. The pattern continued after the war, as Mexico joined in a worldwide economic expansion.

From 1940 to 1980, Mexico's economy grew at an average annual rate of over 6 percent. The Mexican government spent heavily on roads, dams, and irrigation projects. Foreign investment, mostly from the United States, poured into the country, encouraged by political stability, tax breaks, low energy prices, and a labor force tightly controlled by the government. General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler became major employers in Mexico, while plants producing Kellogg cereals, Campbell soup, Heinz ketchup, and Coca-Cola transformed Mexican tastes.

The economic changes recast Mexican society. From 1940 to 1980, the portion of Mexicans living in the countryside fell from 65 to 34 percent. The illiteracy rate dropped from 64 to 17 percent, while the number of university graduates rose fifteen times. During the same period, Mexico's population jumped from 20 to 70 million. Mexico City became the largest city in the world, with dangerous levels of air pollution. (The capital's population was approaching 20 million by 1996.) Serious efforts to lower the birth rate were not introduced until the late 1970s. At the same time, an ecology movement began to raise awareness about the effects of overpopulation and industrialization on Mexico's environment.

Mexican politics during the growth years revolved around sharing the country's new wealth. Under Cardenas, the base of the National Revolutionary Party (renamed the Mexican Revolutionary Party) had been broadened to include peasants, workers, the middle class, and the military. The National Workers Confederation, the National Peasant Organization, and other groups were formed by the party to manage competing interests.

By 1946, when the party was renamed the Institutional Revolutionary Party, Mexico's rulers were in charge of a well-oiled political machine. Party officials turned out voters as needed, while political opposition was contained by a combination of favors and threats. Elections were held with precise regularity, but Mexicans understood that victory was guaranteed for the Institutional Revolutionary Party (known in Mexico by its Spanish acronym, PRI).

> *The party [the PRI] was created as a catch-all that counted on members to be united and unanimous.*
>
> *—Santiago Onate, PRI president*

Mexico's one-party system also opened the door to increased corruption. Government officials handed out state contracts and monopoly privileges to relatives and political allies. Miguel Aleman Valdes, Mexico's president from 1946 to 1952, himself bought property in Acapulco before government construction projects raised land values in the resort city.

Mexico's corruption and authoritarianism, however, clashed with the country's rising educational levels and expanding middle class. The contradiction broke into the open most dramatically in 1968, when Mexico was preparing to become the first developing country to host the Olympics. In the weeks before the summer games were scheduled to open, a mass protest movement sprang up in Mexico City. A government crackdown against student leaders only sparked the participation of hundreds of thousands of middle-class Mexicans. Vowing to end the unrest before the Olympics began, President Gustavo Diaz ordered strong measures. The result was a massacre of 200 to 300 demonstrators in the Plaza of Tlatelolco.

Luis Echeverria, the interior minister responsible for carrying out the massacre, became Mexico's next president in 1970. To the surprise of most, Echeverria's administration took up many of the causes embraced by the student protesters. In foreign policy, Echeverria upset the United States by building closer ties with the communist regime in Cuba. He also spent heavily to reduce poverty.

Echeverria set Mexico on a course that plunged the country deep into debt. His successor, Jose Lopez Portillo, was forced to sharply cut back government spending when he came to office in 1976. The change

in policy, however, proved temporary. In 1978, new discoveries of oil and gas raised Mexico's energy reserves nearly five times. Energy production more than doubled. At the same time, a revolution in the oil-rich country of Iran sent world oil prices skyrocketing.

Mexico experienced an economic boom. Lopez Portillo put aside measures to reform the economy. Instead, he dumped billions of dollars into government projects, while international bankers were eager to lend him more. The Mexican economy grew at 8 percent a year from 1978 to 1981.

Economic trouble surfaced in June 1981, when oil prices slumped. Lopez Portillo continued to borrow from abroad rather than reduce the value of the Mexican peso, which was set by the government. An economic crisis soon followed. Mexicans sold their pesos for dollars and other more stable currencies. By the time Lopez Portillo devalued the peso in 1982, the Mexican economy was near collapse. The country had run up an $80 billion foreign debt and was unable to repay its loans. The United States stepped in with a financial rescue package to enable Mexico to meet its interest payments. Nonetheless, severe damage had been done to Mexico's self-confidence. The country's forty-year "economic miracle" was clearly over.

Part II: Mexico's Free-Market Revolution

Mexico's 1982 financial collapse marked a turning point in the country's development. Since the revolution, Mexico's economic policy had been guided by a strong sense of nationalism. High import tariffs (taxes on imported goods) were levied to protect Mexican producers from foreign competition. Foreign investment was restricted, and the government owned key sectors of the economy, such as oil, communications, and transportation.

Mexico's heavy borrowing under Echeveria and Lopez Portillo undermined the old, inward-looking economic model. With an $80 billion foreign debt, Mexico was facing increasing difficulty in paying the interest on the money it had borrowed. Both Mexican and foreign investors withdrew their money from the country after the government devalued the peso. More than ever, the country was dependent on outsiders to keep its economy afloat. Even with financial help from the United States and other wealthy nations, Mexico's inflation rate in 1982 hit 100 percent while the economy shrank.

For the next several years, Mexico was forced to negotiate new repayment terms with international financial institutions (mostly U.S. banks). Mexico had the second-highest foreign debt in the developing world (behind Brazil), but the country was hardly alone in its economic desperation. Dozens of developing countries had run up enormous debts during the 1970s and early 1980s. International banks shared in the blame, often loaning money to governments that were beset by corruption and mismanagement. A recession in the developed world in 1981-82 brought the cycle of borrowing to an end. Slumping demand in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan pushed down prices for oil, copper, coffee, and other exports from the developing nations.

The debt crisis elevated the importance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The two institutions had been established at the close of World War II to act as building blocks for the international financial order. By the early 1980s, government officials and bankers in the developed world were increasingly turning to the IMF and the World Bank to help collect their loans and prod developing nations to accept their standards for international commerce.

The IMF, in particular, set the tone for fiscal policy in much of the developing world. The IMF provided debtor countries with new loans to help them meet their interest payments. In turn, debtor countries were required to undertake serious economic reform. Throughout much of the developing world, the conditions imposed by the IMF were viewed as bitter medicine.

The direction of Mexico was especially pivotal. Mexico's size and border with the United States gave the country a unique position in the developing world. The 1982 crisis had left Mexico with few financial options, yet a long history of leadership in Latin America and defiance toward the United States made it clear that Mexico could not be bullied.

Technocratic reformers

The president who succeeded Lopez Portillo, Miguel de la Madrid, shared much of the IMF's philosophy. He believed that Mexico had little choice but to fundamentally change its economic course.

De la Madrid was at the vanguard of a new generation of Mexican officials who had grown up during Mexico's long economic expansion. Under President Lopez Portillo, de la Madrid headed the Ministry of Programming and Budget and hired hundreds of young specialists to manage the Mexican economy.

Unlike Mexican officials of an earlier era, few of the "technocrats," as they were known, worked their way up the ranks of the PRI. Many had received their education at top universities in the United States. Most of the technocrats entered government as advisers and analysts. They believed that the free-market economic system and open trade were crucial to solving Mexico's problems.

De la Madrid's policies closely matched the IMF's "structural adjustment" program. De la Madrid kept the peso's exchange rate low to promote exports and discourage imports, cut government spending, raised interest rates to control inflation, and held

down wages. In 1986, Mexico took a major step toward opening its economy by joining the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Membership in GATT required Mexico to lower its trade barriers and reinforced the country's commitment to free-market economic principles.

The economic reforms were generally supported by Mexico's business owners and members of the middle class. Many of them had lost confidence in their government after Lopez Portillo nationalized Mexico's banks and froze foreign currency accounts in 1982.

U.S. leaders also applauded the policies of the de la Madrid administration and lobbied for Mexico in international financial circles. In turn, the IMF and Mexico's other creditors gave Mexico more time to pay back its debt, granted the country new loans, and eventually forgave a portion of the overall debt. By the late 1980s, Mexico's debt crisis had eased.

President Carlos Salinas accelerated the pace of economic reform when he came to power in 1988. With a doctorate in economics from Harvard University and experience as the minister of programming and budget under de la Madrid, Salinas was determined to lead Mexico into the global marketplace.

Salinas vigorously pursued the goals of privatization and free trade. He sold off many of the most prominent state-owned firms, including the country's telephone company, airlines, and a large steel mill. The number of companies under government control dropped from 1,555 in 1982 to 217 in 1992. More than $20 billion was raised in the privatization program, helping Salinas to eliminate Mexico's budget deficit.

Mexico's import tariffs, once among the world's highest, continued to fall under Salinas. From 1985 to 1992, the average tariff on Mexican consumer goods fell from 60 percent to less than 20 percent. Salinas' most dramatic move was to open negotiations with the United States in 1990 on forming a regional trade bloc.

Years of Mexican-U.S. talks eventually produced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which took effect in 1994. NAFTA represented Salinas' crowning achievement. The Mexican president succeeded in linking his country to the United States and Canada — the largest consumer market in the world. Before NAFTA, 14 percent of Mexico's exports to the United States were allowed to cross the border free of tariffs. With NAFTA's enactment, over two-thirds of Mexico's exports were permitted to enter tariff-free, and by 2009 all tariffs are scheduled to be lifted.

Equally important for Salinas was NAFTA's anticipated impact on Mexico's economic outlook. Salinas felt that NAFTA would make his economic reforms irreversible. According to his projections, millions of new jobs would be created as factories and farms increased exports to the North American market. The breakdown in trade barriers would spur modernization and innovation throughout the Mexican economy. Within a few years, Salinas believed, a solid majority of Mexicans would identify free trade with their own economic interests.

False start

Internationally, Salinas' reforms made Mexico a hot spot for investors. Progress in the NAFTA negotiations, the United States' strong commitment to Mexico's transformation, and Salinas' success in lowering inflation and the budget deficit created the impression that Mexico was poised for an economic takeoff. Many economists predicted that Mexico would follow the path toward prosperity set by the rapidly developing countries of East Asia or Chile.

From 1990 to 1993, Mexico attracted more foreign investment ($53 billion) than any other developing country. Mexico's exports boomed, thanks largely to growth in manufacturing. General Motors became Mexico's largest private employer, with forty plants and a work force of 40,000. Oil, which had once been Mexico's main source of foreign revenue, accounted for less than one-fifth of the country's exports. After a prolonged economic slump, Mexico's economy grew at over 3 percent annually.

Even as Mexicans looked forward to a brighter future, however, signs of economic trouble began to surface. The lowering of trade barriers allowed Mexican consumers to go on a spending spree. From 1988 to 1994, imports rose about 25 percent annually, much

faster than the increase in exports. By 1992, Mexico's trade deficit had widened to $20 billion. (The U.S. trade deficit that year totaled $84.5 billion.)

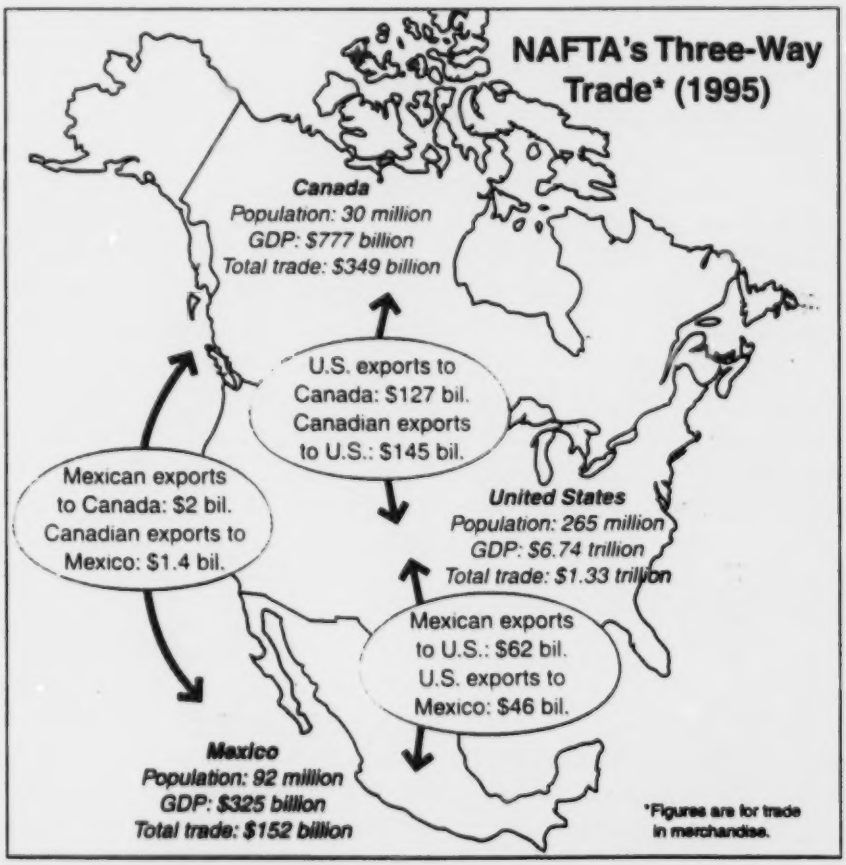
The trade deficit affirmed that Mexicans were not saving enough of their earnings to lay the groundwork for long-term economic growth. Foreign investment provided part of the answer to Mexico's need for capital. However, most of the foreign investment in the 1990s was placed in Mexico's surging stock and bond markets, where it could be quickly withdrawn. Only a small portion went toward direct investment in factories, farms, and other productive enterprises.

Even foreign investment in Mexico's manufacturing sector often produced disappointing results. The most notable examples were the more than 2,000 assembly plants, or *maquiladoras*, in northern Mexico that put together electronic goods, auto parts, and other items for shipment across the U.S. border. Although the *maquiladora* belt accounted for a large share of Mexico's export growth and featured top U.S. and Japanese companies, the more than 600,000 Mexican workers employed there made on average only about $5 a day. Moreover, the *maquiladoras* did little to contribute to the growth of Mexican manufacturing. Less than 2 percent of the supplies consumed by the plants each year came from Mexican producers. Mexico's bureaucracy, banking system, and poor transportation network remained obstacles to new businesses.

Much of Salinas' privatization program also failed to address the need for long-term economic growth. In many cases, state-run monopolies were sold to private buyers with political connections. The buyer of Mexico's telephone company became one of the world's richest men largely because he faced no competition on international calls and was able to charge customers high rates. Under Salinas, the number of billionaires in Mexico rose from two to twenty-four. Only the United States, Germany, and Japan were better represented than Mexico on a list of the world's wealthiest individuals in 1994.

Politics and Economics Collide

Through 1993 and much of 1994, praise for Mexico's economic reforms overshadowed warnings about underlying problems. At the international level, leaders in the United States and other developed nations presented Mexico as safely on the road to free-market prosperity, democracy, and stability. President Bill Clinton's support for Salinas was critical to the ratification of NAFTA in the U.S. Congress in the fall of 1993. Clinton overcame fierce opposition to the agreement in the United States by claiming that


NAFTA's Three-Way Trade* (1995)
Canada
Population: 30 million
GDP: $777 billion
Total trade: $349 billion
U.S. exports to Canada: $127 bil.
Canadian exports to U.S.: $145 bil.
Mexican exports to Canada: $2 bil.
Canadian exports to Mexico: $1.4 bil.
United States
Population: 265 million
GDP: $6.74 trillion
Total trade: $1.33 trillion
Mexican exports to U.S.: $62 bil.
U.S. exports to Mexico: $46 bil.
Mexico
Population: 92 million
GDP: $325 billion
Total trade: $152 billion
*Figures are for trade in merchandise.

the Mexican market offered tremendous opportunities for North American exporters.

In Mexico itself, the 1994 presidential elections gave the Salinas administration reason to downplay economic problems. Salinas had come to office in 1988 in one of the most hard-fought elections in Mexican history. His main opponent had been Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, the son of the widely revered former president Lazaro Cardenas. Cardenas had left the PRI to form a new political party, charging that the PRI was turning its back on Mexico's poor. The enthusiasm Cardenas generated among voters had not been seen in Mexico since the days of his father. Officially, Salinas won the presidency with 49 percent of the vote to 30 percent for Cardenas. Evidence of massive fraud, however, convinced millions of Mexicans that the PRI had stolen the election.

Winning over the electorate

Salinas was determined to hold onto power for the PRI. The situation in 1994, however, demanded that the PRI win fairly. NAFTA and economic reform had brought worldwide attention to Mexico. For the first time, international observers would be on hand to monitor the elections in 1994. The political landscape in Mexico had changed too. Opponents of the PRI were becoming increasingly outspoken and more likely to protest election fraud.

To maintain the PRI's appeal to the poor, especially in the countryside, Salinas spent more than $12 billion during his administration on self-help programs to raise living standards. Communities that had supported Cardenas in 1988 received top priority.

More significant was Salinas' fiscal policy. Mexico's rising trade deficit was worrisome to economic analysts both within Mexico and abroad. The figure suggested that the value of the peso was too high relative to the U.S. dollar. By 1994, foreign investment in Mexico had begun to slow, forcing Salinas to draw on his country's reserve of dollars and other foreign currencies to finance economic development.

Salinas' training as an economist told the Mexican president that the peso needed to be devalued to make Mexico's exports more competitive and to raise the price of imports. Salinas' political role, however, overruled economic logic. Salinas refused to devalue the peso in 1993 for fear that a rise in Mexican exports to the United States would lead the U.S. Congress to reject NAFTA. As the Mexican elections approached, Salinas believed that a strong peso was critical to the PRI's success. He was especially concerned with holding onto the support of Mexico's middle class, which had grown attached to buying imported clothes, appliances, and other goods with the strong peso.

The strength of the peso took on added importance in light of a series of blows to Mexico's political stability. The outbreak of guerrilla warfare in Chiapas in January 1994 stood out in sharp contrast to the image of Mexico projected by Salinas. Although a cease-fire ended most of the fighting after twelve days, the Chiapas uprising damaged Mexico's self-confidence and international reputation.

Equally disturbing was a string of assassinations at the top levels of Mexican society. In May 1993, Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas, a leader in Mexico's Catholic Church, was gunned down in Guadalajara. In March 1994, the PRI's popular presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, was shot at a campaign rally in Tijuana. A month after the presidential elections, Jose Francisco Ruiz, the head of the PRI and Salinas' former brother-in-law, was killed in Mexico City.

The government investigations that followed the assassinations left a mistrustful Mexican public with more questions than answers. Officials claimed that Cardinal Posadas had been accidently caught in the crossfire of a shootout between rival drug gangs. Colosio's murder was blamed on a crazed laborer acting alone. In the case of Ruiz, police arrested Salinas' brother, Raul, in March 1995 for masterminding the assassination. (Carlos Salinas insisted he was not connected to the killing.)

Bitter victory

The 1994 elections were the fairest in Mexican history. Nonetheless, they were an unequal contest. The PRI's domination of the media, economic policy, and access to government funds assured victory. Officially, the PRI presidential candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, won with 50 percent of the vote. There was

fraud, but much less than in earlier elections. Few doubted that Zedillo had won by a comfortable margin over his two principal rivals.

From the start of his presidency, Zedillo stood apart from his predecessors. Because he was a substitute for the assassinated Colosio, Zedillo came to office without having made the typical campaign promises to PRI insiders. In fact, his statements quickly turned many of the party's old-guard bosses against him.

Zedillo declared that he would sever the many ties binding the PRI to the government. He dedicated himself to establishing the rule of law in Mexico, and pledged to rein in the power of corrupt politicians and law enforcement officials. To illustrate his commitment to change, Zedillo appointed a member of the National Action Party as attorney general and promised that he would not choose his successor in the year 2000.

Zedillo's personality and background, however, seemed an odd match with the new president's bold agenda. Only 42 years old when he took office, Zedillo often appeared uneasy in his leadership role. Many Mexicans saw his mild-mannered style as a sign of weakness. They worried that the young technocrat would be overwhelmed by his political enemies. In Mexico's Congress, the 1994 elections had given opposition parties a stronger voice than ever. Zedillo's opponents at the state level, both within the PRI and outside of the party, were also more willing to defy the president.

> *It is amazing to think that it has turned out to be this unprepared, accidental president [Zedillo] who faces the greatest challenge in Mexico since the revolution.*
>
> —*Carlos Fuentes, Mexican author*

The crash

The challenges facing Zedillo were greatly complicated by the economic crisis that struck less than three weeks after his inauguration. Mexico's economic policy by December 1994 was in serious need of adjustment. The country's foreign reserves had dropped by $20 billion during the year. At the same time, Mexico had financed the shortfall by running up $29 billion in short-term, high-interest debt.

Salinas refused to devalue the peso even after the August 1994 elections. He was a candidate to become the first director of the World Trade Organization (the successor to the GATT) and wanted to leave office on a positive note. Instead, the devaluation was left to Zedillo.

In mid-December, the new president informed a group of his closest advisers and supporters that he would devalue the peso within a few days. Many of them took advantage of the advance warning to convert their assets to dollars or other foreign currencies. International financial markets saw the rush to sell pesos as a sign that Mexico's economy was in deep trouble. When Zedillo officially announced that the value of the peso would be reduced 15 percent relative to the dollar, financial panic triggered a stampede. Within a few hours, $6 billion worth of pesos were exchanged for foreign currencies.

In the weeks that followed, both Mexican and foreign investors continued to sell their pesos. The real value of the peso in international markets, which the Mexican government could not control, fell by over half in three months. The Mexican stock market, long a favorite among international financial traders, lost nearly half its value.

The crisis sparked by the devaluation hit Mexico much harder than the Zedillo administration had forecast. As in 1982, Mexico faced bankruptcy. World leaders feared that the crisis would spawn a "tequila effect," setting off financial panics in other developing countries and undermining the entire model of free-market economic reform.

In the short term, the United States stepped in to save Mexico from defaulting on its foreign debt payments. In early 1995, President Clinton arranged an emergency rescue package of about $50 billion for Mexico. The United States extended up to $20 billion in loans and loan guarantees. Clinton persuaded the IMF, major banks, Canada, and several Latin American countries to make another $30 billion available.

In Mexico, Zedillo took measures to restore confidence in the economy. He raised Mexico's sales tax

Rocha in *La Jornada*

President Zedillo aims an arrow of economic statistics at former president Salinas.

from 10 percent to 15 percent and increased the prices the government charged consumers for energy. Government spending was slashed. At the same time, Zedillo announced a new round of privatization affecting railroads, airports, harbors, highways, satellites, energy plants, and petrochemical factories.

The United States and the IMF praised Zedillo's belt-tightening program. By the spring of 1995, the immediate crisis had subsided, and Mexico was moving along the recovery path that economists had predicted. Exports grew by one-third in 1995 while imports fell by 8 percent. Foreign reserves doubled. By the summer of 1996, Zedillo's government had paid back nearly three-quarters of the $12.5 billion Mexico borrowed from the United States.

Mexican workers and small-business owners, especially members of the middle class, felt the pain of the crisis. Over 1 million lost their jobs as the country's economic output dipped by 6 percent. Wages declined by at least one-third. Even as economic statistics reported solid growth in 1996, the average Mexican was left with a lower income than he or she had earned in 1980.

Part III: Identifying the Challenges Ahead

Most Mexicans are pessimistic by nature. Their history has prepared them for disappointment. Thus, when the 1994 economic crash occurred, many responded with a mixture of disgust and bitter humor.

The chief target of their scorn was Salinas. He had left the presidency near the peak of his popularity. Within a few months, however, he became one of the most despised figures in Mexico. His brother's arrest for the murder of the PRI's general secretary opened the door to additional scandals linking the Salinas clan to corruption and drug trafficking. As the former president's reputation fell, so did Mexican support for Salinas' economic policies.

Zedillo could not escape the backlash. His opponents charged that he was a puppet of the United States and the IMF. Mexico City's central plaza, the Zocalo, came alive with artful posters and banners ridiculing the government. Protesters mocked earlier hopes that Mexico would soon by ranked among the developed nations by chanting, "First world. Ha, ha, ha."

Even in their disappointment, however, the Mexican people could hardly deny that the changes their country had undergone were real. Mexico's economic direction had changed course under de la Madrid and Salinas. NAFTA had created new pressures and new opportunities. The Mexican people had changed too. They were more demanding, more critical of their leaders, and more impatient for democratic reform. Finally, there was a widespread belief that Mexico was at a critical juncture in its history.

In the following pages, you will learn about the challenges facing Mexico as it moves toward the 21st century. Three critical areas will be examined: the evolution of Mexico's political system; the country's economic development, especially in light of NAFTA; and the forces tugging at Mexico's social fabric.

Political Reform

The memory of the Mexican Revolution has served as an anchor for Mexico's political system. The heroes and ideals of the revolution continue to inspire Mexicans today. At the same time, the horrific violence of the era serves as a warning against political instability.

The PRI has been the main beneficiary of the revolution's legacy. Until recently, most Mexicans were willing to go along with the country's one-party system. The PRI's dictatorship was not without brutality. Officials occasionally resorted to torture and murder to silence their opponents. For the most part, however, PRI leaders sought to build bridges to their critics. Political alliances were typically secured through government jobs and projects. In a country where most people received their news through television and radio, the PRI maintained a firm grip on the electronic media. At the same time, the party allowed newspaper journalists a surprising degree of freedom. Even Mexico's main opposition party, the National Action Party (PAN), raised few protests against the arrangement.

The PRI's traditional levers of power, however, have been seriously weakened by Mexico's economic reforms. The privatization of Mexican industry has meant that there are far fewer jobs to award political supporters. With the emphasis on free trade and deregulation, government control over the economy has given way to the forces of the free market. Cuts in government spending have limited the PRI's ability to carry out popular social programs.

Dictatorship to democracy

By the late 1980s, pressure for democracy had begun to boil over the top of the Mexican political system. PAN, the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), and other leading opposition parties took their roles more seriously. Protests against election fraud grew more strident. De la Madrid and Salinas were careful not to relinquish political control, yet they wanted to present themselves as reformers both internationally and at home. They lent their support to fair elections at the local and state levels.

The 1988 national elections were a turning point. Although Salinas was declared the victor in the presidential race, charges of fraud both angered and

energized Mexican voters. Meanwhile, election results for the 500-member Mexican Congress gave the PRI a bare majority. For the first time, the PRI needed to negotiate with other political parties in the legislature.

Momentum for democratic reform gathered steam in the following years. In 1989, a PAN candidate for the governorship of Baja California Norte became the first member of an opposition party to break the PRI's hold over political control of Mexico's thirty-one states. By 1996, PAN mayors governed five of Mexico's seven largest cities. In federal elections, voter turnout reached record levels, rising from 50 percent in 1988 to 65.4 percent in 1991 (for congressional elections) to 77.7 percent in 1994. A debate among the presidential candidates broadcast in May 1994 attracted the largest audience in the history of Mexican television.

Mexicans are better informed and more highly organized too. Since the 1980s, Mexico's press has taken bold steps to assert its independence, while the government's monopoly on television news has ended. Hundreds of new grass-roots organizations have sprouted beyond the reach of the PRI. *El Barzon* (The Yoke), for example, claims a membership of more than 1 million indebted small business owners and farmers who have been pushed toward bankruptcy by the latest recession.

Uncertain challengers

Zedillo brought to office a commitment to democracy. In negotiations with opposition parties, he has agreed to end many of the PRI's advantages in upcoming elections. By the time Mexico holds congressional elections in mid-1997, PRI candidates are likely to face new restrictions on campaign spending and access to government funding. Moreover, the PRI's grip on labor unions and the electronic media is being loosened.

Mexico's opposition parties, however, may not be fully prepared for power. PAN is the most well-established alternative to the PRI, but the party's strength is still largely confined to northern Mexico. Moreover, the PRI's free-market economic reform program has blurred many of the traditional distinctions between the two parties. In recent years, PAN candidates have campaigned largely against the PRI's record of corruption, not against the government's economic policies.

The PRD, the other leading challenger to the PRI, has been shaken by internal divisions since the weak showing of its candidate, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, in the 1994 presidential race. Founded to act as the voice of Mexico's poor, the PRD has harshly criticized free-market reform. At the same time, party leaders have failed to convince Mexican voters that they offer a clear path to a better future.

Ultimately, the most serious threat to the PRI may come from within the party itself. While Zedillo leads the party's technocratic wing toward reform, resistance remains strong among the PRI's regional bosses. Known by their foes as "dinosaurs," the party's old guard has stood in the way of the privatization of state-run industries and the breakdown of the PRI dictatorship. The regional strongmen have shown a readiness to turn to violence to preserve their power. In 1995, for example, seventeen peasants were gunned down by police as they headed for a demonstration in the state of Guerrero.

Economic Tilt

The financial crisis that struck Mexico in December 1994 has severely tested the country's faith in free-market economic reform. Except for a brief spurt in economic growth in the early 1990s, Mexicans have known only recession since the technocrats began dismantling the old system.

From 1982 to 1995, Mexico's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) dropped 15 percent. The country's extremely wealthy elite has grown richer, while the middle class and poor have seen their living standards slip. The majority of Mexican households live on an income of less than $5,000 a year. Many get by without regular jobs and the most basic services. The contrast is most vivid in Mexico City, where a sprawling slum lacking running water, sewers, and safe electricity flanks the capital's modern international airport.

Mexico's leaders are painfully aware of the need for economic development. With 900,000 Mexicans

entering the work force every year, the country requires an annual growth rate of 5 percent just to absorb the new workers into the job market.

Adding up the NAFTA scorecard

Mexican technocrats have pinned much of their hope on boosting Mexico's export industries. NAFTA is the core of their strategy, making the trade agreement a symbolic battleground in Mexico's political arena.

NAFTA has already spawned success stories. Mexico's most efficient industries, such as high-tech steel plants and glass manufacturers in Monterrey, have substantially increased their exports to the United States and Canada. In 1995, Mexico recorded its first trade surplus with the United States since 1990.

Most Mexicans, however, link NAFTA with their country's latest economic recession. They blame NAFTA for the thousands of jobs lost in struggling factories producing toys, candy, textiles, and other consumer goods. Thousands of neighborhood bakeries that once served up tortillas have gone bankrupt in the face of competition from American-made imports. Many economists question if propelling Mexico from protectionism to free trade in less than a decade was too rushed. They note that Mexican economic policy has yet to catch up fully with the shift. Mexican businesses, for example, still pay a 2 percent tax for each worker and piece of machinery they employ.

> *It's as if I climbed in the ring with Mike Tyson for fifteen rounds. The impact [of NAFTA] has been brutal.*
>
> *—Javier Higuera, unemployed accountant*

The effect of NAFTA on Mexico's self-image has also been jarring. American-style department stores and fast-food chains have turned many of northern

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Mexico's cities into close cousins of San Antonio, El Paso, or Tuscon. After decades of keeping its distance from the United States, Mexico is becoming more like its colossal neighbor to the north.

Looking north

Since the Mexican Revolution, Mexico's leaders have traditionally sought to assert their country's independence by keeping the United States at arm's length. In the United Nations, Mexico routinely opposed U.S. interests. Mexico was also one of the few countries in the Western Hemisphere to reject cooperation with the U.S. military. The Mexican armed forces long identified the United States as Mexico's most likely enemy. Until 1996, Mexico refused to extradite Mexican citizens wanted for crimes in the United States.

> *So far from God. So close to the United States.*
> *—Mexican expression*

Mexico's economic reforms and NAFTA have been accompanied by a shift in Mexican policy toward the United States. Mexican leaders in 1996 agreed to buy U.S. weapons and send their country's soldiers to the United States for training. Mexico has also abandoned its position of leadership in the developing world and softened its criticism of U.S. foreign policy.

From the Mexican perspective, Mexican-U.S. relations have never been an equal contest. The United States has long held enormous economic leverage over Mexico. U.S. economic output is about twenty times greater than the output of Mexico. The United States accounts for about three-quarters of Mexico's imports and exports, while Mexico is involved in less than 10 percent of total U.S. trade.

There is also a huge imbalance in terms of attention. Mexicans have long been absorbed by their country's relationship with the United States. The territorial losses of the Mexican-American War are still a common point of reference in Mexican politics. In contrast, North Americans have rarely looked south. Only in recent years, with the discovery of new oil deposits, the rising tide of illegal immigration, and the passage of NAFTA, has Mexico come into sharper focus for the United States.

The issue of undocumented Mexican immigration to the United States has been especially sensitive. Mexican leaders are under pressure to defend the rights of their citizens in the United States. At the same time, they face demands from Washington to control the flow of illegal aliens across the border. Mexican officials have recently suggested that the United States issue work permits to protect Mexican laborers from abuse. Meanwhile, they have allowed the United States to airlift Mexican illegal aliens deep into Mexico, rather than dropping them across the border.

Sitting Atop a Volcano

Along the southeastern rim of the Valley of Mexico, about 50 miles from Mexico City, stands the

El Fisgon in *La Jornada*

A Mexican view of U.S. border control policy.

simmering Popocatepetl volcano. After five decades of calm, *"El Popo,"* as the volcano is called, began showing signs of life in 1994. The recent activity, featuring occasional emissions of ash and steam, has led scientists to warn that the volcano is in danger of a major eruption. They cannot predict exactly when the volcano will blow its top, or how violent the eruption will be, but they emphasize that the threat must be taken seriously.

Many Mexicans view their country's future in a similar light. They are not so much concerned with the latest financial crisis or the challenge of political reform, but the widespread sense that Mexico's stability is on shaky ground. There are certainly valid reasons for worry. Mexico's population of 92 million people is pressing the limits of the country's resources. Moreover, Mexican expectations for a better life rose markedly during the early 1990s.

Crime wave

Among the most troubling signs of instability has been a recent jump in Mexico's crime rate. Throughout the country, an increase in robbery, assault, and other examples of street crime have contributed to a climate of fear.

The crime wave includes a highly organized element too. Since the late 1980s, drug trafficking in Mexico has become a growth industry. Mexican drug bosses are now working closely with their counterparts in Colombia to smuggle cocaine into the United States. Many have set up their own distribution networks in the U.S. market.

U.S. sources contend that as much as 70 percent of the cocaine reaching the United States comes through Mexico. In addition, Mexican drug traffickers supply most of the heroin consumed in the western states of the United States and have expanded their trade in marijuana and synthetic drugs, such as methamphetamines. In all, Mexican drug traffickers bring in $7-10 billion a year.

The Zedillo administration has warned that the drug trade poses a threat to Mexico's security and stability. Drug profits have allowed major traffickers to buy off police, military, and political officials at the local level. Many Mexicans believe that drug money has penetrated the top ranks of the government. The string of assassinations that has recently jolted Mexico is seen as linked to the corrupting influence of the drug trade.

Trouble in the countryside

While the problem of drug trafficking dates back only a few decades, the challenges of land reform and the fate of Indian communities are as old as Mexico itself.

Roughly one-quarter of the country's people still live in the countryside, often in suffocating poverty. The land reforms that are most closely associated with the presidency of Lazaro Cardenas were not sufficient to bring prosperity to countryside. Rising population has left many peasants with tiny plots. Few banks are interested in offering loans to support small farmers, while government investment in farming has been meager.

The *ejidos* — the centerpiece of Cardenas' reforms — are home to 15 million of Mexico's poorest citizens. Most peasants on *ejido* land continue to grow corn and beans, rejecting other more profitable crops in favor of the traditions of their ancestors. When harvests are poor, many work illegally in the United States to feed their families. Roughly 80 percent of ejidos consume virtually all of the food they produce. Meanwhile, Mexico must import corn to feed its cities.

Salinas overturned the *ejido* system established under Cardenas. He amended the constitution to permit the privatization of *ejido* lands, which had been owned by the state. For the first time since the revolution, peasants were allowed to buy and sell land and seek foreign investment.

Salinas hoped that breaking up the *ejido* system would promote the modernization of agriculture in the central and southern parts of the country. He saw successful commercial farms in northern Mexico as a model. There, farmers grow cotton, oranges, strawberries, melons, cucumbers, tomatoes and other export crops, often on irrigated land.

Modernization, however, has brought more misery to the Mexican countryside, at least in the short term. The demands of agricultural efficiency require larger plots. As peasants sell their land, they often

head to big cities or the United States in search of work. In addition, those who remain must compete against U.S.-grown corn and other imported crops as a result of NAFTA.

Roots of an uprising

Virtually all of Mexico's problems have collided in Chiapas, the country's southernmost state. The break-up of the *ejido* system, NAFTA, overpopulation, and the steady destruction of tropical forest have compounded the region's deep-seated poverty. The drug trade has escalated the level of violence, even as new democratic movements have provided an outlet for the concerns of the poor.

Finally, the scars of the Spanish conquest remain visible in Chiapas' stark economic divisions. Forty-five percent of the land in Chiapas is held by 1 percent of the state's landowners. Thousands of landless peasants have been forced to work for low wages on the cattle ranches and cotton plantations of the wealthy.

> *We are a product of 500 years of struggle....But today we say enough!*
>
> *—From the "Declaration of War" of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation*

The Chiapas uprising that began in January 1994 grew out of the region's inequality. The rebels brought to the negotiating table issues — land reform, Indian rights, democratic representation — that have been central to Mexican politics for decades, if not for centuries. The uprising also dramatized the plight of Mexico's Indians, who comprise at least 10 percent of the country's population and form the backbone of the *ejido* system.

Officially, Indian peoples have symbolized the heart of Mexico's cultural identity since the revolution. Government policy has focused on strengthening Indian communities through bilingual education and the preservation of local traditions. Nonetheless, few of Mexico's Indian groups are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities generated by economic reform. On the contrary, their low levels of education and concentration in the countryside have left them especially vulnerable.

Today, the most effective weapon the Indians hold may be their power over Mexico's international image. Unlike many of its neighbors in Latin America, Mexico has largely avoided guerrilla violence since the 1930s. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation, led by a masked former university professor known as Subcomandante Marcos, is in effect betting that international opinion will be a key factor in the decisions of the Mexican government

In 1996, the emergence of

Ahumada in *La Jornada*

The spirit of Emiliano Zapata, symbolized in this cartoon by the revolutionary leader's handlebar mustache, continues to elude its enemies.

a new guerrilla group drew the spotlight away from the Zapatistas and compounded the problems of the Zedillo administration. The Popular Revolutionary Army, based in the southwestern states of Guerrero and Oaxaca, embraces a much more violent, extremist philosophy than the Zapatistas. The guerrillas claim to be fighting for the overthrow of the government. In August 1996, they ambushed policemen and army bases in six states, leaving sixteen dead.

Zedillo has drawn a distinction between the Zapatistas and the Popular Revolutionary Army. While negotiating with the Zapatistas and pledging to improve conditions for Chiapas' Indians, he has condemned the Popular Revolutionary Army as a gang of fanatic terrorists. Most important, he has sought to convince both Mexicans and foreigners that his country is not about to explode.

Conclusion

Like the Mexican people themselves, you will have an opportunity in the coming days to consider a range of alternatives for Mexico's future. The three viewpoints, or Futures, that you will explore in the next part of this unit are written from a Mexican perspective. Each is based on a distinct set of values and beliefs about the appropriate economic system, political structure, and social priorities for Mexico. You should think of the Futures as a tool designed to help you better understand the contrasting political philosophies from which the Mexican people may choose. At the end of this unit, you will be asked to make your own choices about where Mexico should be heading.

Futures in Brief

Future 1 — Justice for the People

The will of the Mexican people is being denied in the name of international capitalism and free markets. NAFTA has opened our country to a new form of exploitation by the United States. Mexico has been shoved, weak and defenseless, into the global marketplace. The results have been devastating. Mexico must heed the cry for justice from its people. We must rekindle the promise of the Mexican Revolution for those who have known only poverty and oppression. Fairness and equality must serve as the foundation for a new society. The enormous imbalance between rich and poor must be corrected. With commitment and struggle, all Mexicans can at last have an opportunity to share in the wealth of our country.

Future 2 — Restore Order and Stability

After decades of steady advancement, our country's era of stability and development has been sidetracked. In its place, we have crime, corruption, and disorder. The technocrats responsible for the mess call our present turmoil the price of progress. In reality, Mexico is sliding backward. We are drifting toward a repetition of the violence and destruction of the revolution. Mexico must take strong measures to restore order and turn back the forces of disintegration. The unrestrained capitalism of the United States cannot be transplanted to Mexican soil. Nor can our carefully crafted political system be overturned in the span of a few years. Rather, we must follow a course that fits Mexico. Let us join together in restoring the system that has served our country well.

Future 3 — Embrace the Future

At long last, Mexico is in a position to realize its potential. Our country stands ready to make the leap from poverty to prosperity, from the rule of force to the rule of law. Since the early 1980s, Mexico has undergone a painful yet necessary transformation. We have prodded Mexico to the doorstep of the democratic, free-market world. Mexico must not retreat from our country's march of progress. We should step up our efforts to guide our country into the 21st century. Through renewed emphasis on improving the efficiency of the Mexican economy, we can expand exports and generate millions of new jobs. At the same time, economic reforms go hand-in-hand with the transformation of our political system. We have come much too far to turn back now.

Future 1

JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE

Mexican history is scarred by betrayal and injustice. The blood of Emiliano Zapata, Miguel Hidalgo, and Cuauhtemoc bear witness to the triumph of the powerful over the powerless. The same is happening today. The will of the Mexican people is being denied in the name of international capitalism and free markets. NAFTA has opened our country to a new form of exploitation by the United States. Mexico has been shoved, weak and defenseless, into the global marketplace. The results have been devastating. The vast majority of Mexicans have seen their living standards drop since the early 1980s. Millions of peasants have been pushed off the land. Unemployment has reduced a generation of workers to desperate poverty. Meanwhile, a handful of rich families has snatched up still more of our country's wealth.

Mexico must heed the cry for justice from its people. We must rekindle the promise of the Mexican Revolution for those who have known only poverty and oppression. Fairness and equality must serve as the foundation for a new society. We should begin the process of building a new Mexico by re-examining our roots as a people. The great civilizations that flourished in our country before the conquest of the Spanish deserve renewed attention as we look toward the future. The land and the people who farm it must be protected and nurtured. Government investment and land reform should concentrate on revitalizing our *ejido* communities and ensuring that Mexico can feed itself. In the broader economic sphere, Mexico must pursue a policy of economic development that places the needs of our people first. Our country's workers must be shielded from the twists and turns of international financial markets. The enormous imbalance between rich and poor must be corrected. Finally, our country's political system must be reformed to give a voice to the voiceless. True democracy must bring power to the people. With commitment and struggle, all Mexicans can at last have an opportunity to share in the wealth of our country.

What policies should we pursue?

- Mexico should undertake a program of economic development. The state should take a leading role in managing the economy and promoting higher living standards. The minimum wage should be raised, the wealthy should be forced to pay their fair share of taxes, and government projects should be launched to hire the unemployed.

- Mexico should join with other developing nations to form a united front in trade negotiations with the developed world. Trade and investment policy should be designed to protect Mexican industry and safeguard our natural resources from foreign exploitation.

- Mexico should join with labor unions and environmental groups in the United States and Canada to press for the renegotiation of NAFTA. A revised agreement should center on protecting workers' rights, the environment, and farming communities.

- Mexico should ensure that all of its citizens enjoy full democratic rights. The advantages of the PRI should be eliminated to create a level playing field for all political parties.

- Mexico should direct new resources toward strengthening *ejidos* and increasing food production for the Mexican market. Land taken unfairly from peasants should be returned.

- Mexico should nurture the language and culture of Indian communities.

- Mexico should place special emphasis on the development of the poor, especially women, through education, training, and self-help programs.

Future 1 is based on the following beliefs

- The state needs to play a central role in Mexico's economic development in order to put the country's resources to work for the common good and to reduce poverty.
- Mexico's problems, both today and in the past, are due mainly to the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a tiny, undemocratic elite.
- The international system, led by the United States, is based on the exploitation of Mexico and other developing nations.

PROS

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Developing a program of careful economic planning will focus the country's economic resources on improving the lives of the Mexican people.
2. Clearing away the obstacles to full democracy will give all Mexicans, including the poor, an interest in maintaining a stable, democratic political system.

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3. Investing in the advancement of peasant communities and other disadvantaged groups will finally allow the poorest among us to fully participate in the development of Mexican society.

CONS

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Reversing years of free-market reform will leave Mexico isolated from the mainstream of the global economy and destroy the confidence of investors, both at home and abroad, in the Mexican economy.
2. Picking a fight with the United States will spark a trade war with our largest trading partner and close off markets to Mexico's export industries.
3. Re-establishing state control over the economy will undermine the modernization of Mexican industry, paving the way for the return of inefficiency, corruption, and backwardness.
4. Raising the political expectations of Mexico's poor will lead to greater pressure for reckless change and will ultimately sharpen tensions within Mexican society.

Future 2

Restore Order and Stability

Mexico is a country in crisis. After decades of steady advancement, our country's era of stability and development has been sidetracked. In its place, we have crime, corruption, and disorder. Mexican society is unraveling, and the chaos threatens to swallow up our entire country. The technocrats responsible for the mess call our present turmoil the price of progress. In reality, Mexico is sliding backward. We are drifting toward a repetition of the violence and destruction of the revolution. The latest financial crisis, the recent wave of assassinations, and the guerrilla movements in Chiapas, Guerrero, and Oaxaca should serve as a warning. Mexico is on the wrong path. We have to return to the policies that laid the foundation for four decades of stability and development.

Mexico must take strong measures to restore order and turn back the forces of disintegration. The reckless experiments that have been imposed on our country must come to a halt. Mexico is unique. The unrestrained capitalism of the United States cannot be transplanted to Mexican soil. Nor can our carefully crafted political system be overturned in the span of a few years. Rather, we must follow a course that fits Mexico. We must recognize that our society cannot withstand the pressures of rapid change. The modernization of Mexico's economy is important, but the country must not be left at the mercy of North American investors and the global marketplace. Millions of Mexican workers cannot be thrown into the streets in the name of free trade. Giving Mexicans a political voice is a worthy goal, but there is already room for differing opinions under the umbrella of the PRI. Above all, we as Mexicans should take pride in the society that we have built since the revolution. Let us not turn our back on Mexico's accomplishments. Instead, let us join together in restoring the system that has served our country well.

What policies should we pursue?

- Mexico should re-establish state ownership over key industries, such as energy, communications, and transportation. The government should serve as a partner to leading private companies to ensure their stability and success.

- Mexico should protect important industries from unfair foreign competition. Foreign investment should be sought to advance the modernization of manufacturing and agriculture.

- Mexico should insist that NAFTA be renegotiated to protect vulnerable sectors of the Mexican economy.

- Mexico should take strong measures to reverse the spiral of political violence and unrest. The role of the PRI in promoting the unity and stability of Mexican society should be strengthened.

- Mexico should crack down against drug traffickers and concentrate on lowering the crime rate.

- Mexico should invest in strengthening important public institutions, such as schools, the university system, and *ejidos*.

- Mexico should promote a cooperative partnership between labor and industry.

Future 2 is based on the following beliefs

- With its history of violence and division, Mexico needs a strong central government to maintain stability and prevent chaos.
- The economic and political system of the United States is not suitable for Mexico.
- Unless people are united around a common set of goals, they will turn against one another.

PROS

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Restoring the authority of the central government will strengthen the state's ability to combat the rise of crime and drug trafficking.
2. Rebuilding the legitimacy of the PRI will help promote compromise among Mexico's competing interests and heal the divisions within our society.

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3. Sheltering the Mexican economy from the full force of foreign competition will allow local companies to take root and grow.

CONS

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Retreating from Mexico's commitment to free trade and free markets will lead foreign investors to withdraw their money from our country and trigger an economic collapse.
2. Blocking the road to democratic reform will force groups opposed to the government to turn to violence to make themselves heard.
3. Strengthening the power of the central government will only deepen the corruption and mismanagement that has crippled Mexican society.
4. Raising trade barriers to protect the Mexican economy will spark our NAFTA partners to retaliate and close the North American market to Mexican exports.

Future 3

EMBRACE THE FUTURE

At long last, Mexico is in a position to realize its potential. Our country stands ready to make the leap from poverty to prosperity, from the rule of force to the rule of law. Since the early 1980s, Mexico has undergone a painful yet necessary transformation. We have torn down the barriers that have stifled innovation in our economy. We have exposed Mexican industries to the invigorating winds of competition. A spotlight has been turned on the corruption and abuse within our political system. In short, we have prodded Mexico to the doorstep of the democratic, free-market world. Now we are ready to move forward.

Mexico must not retreat from our country's march of progress. The latest crisis must not be allowed to derail our program of reform. On the contrary, we should step up our efforts to guide our country into the 21st century. Through renewed emphasis on improving the efficiency of the Mexican economy, we can expand exports and generate millions of new jobs. Through a strong commitment to free-market principles, we can attract new foreign investment and continue the modernization of Mexican industry. Let us not lose sight of the opportunities before us. NAFTA has linked our country to the richest market in the world. Trade barriers no longer separate Mexican factories and farms from the nearly 300 million prosperous consumers to our north. At the same time, economic reforms go hand-in-hand with the transformation of our political system. Mexico must continue on the path toward democracy. If we are eventually to take our place among the world's developed nations, we have to live by internationally accepted standards of law and human rights. We have come much too far to turn back now.

What policies should we pursue?

- Mexico should move forward with the process of free-market economic reform. Special privileges and outdated regulations should be eliminated to spur competition. State-run companies, including the oil industry, should be sold to private investors.

- Mexico should lower trade barriers and reform its legal system to promote the growth of export industries and encourage foreign investment.

- Mexico should strongly support the implementation of NAFTA without delay.

- Mexico should strive to establish a stable political system based on the rule of law. Democratic reforms should be gradually introduced to guarantee fair, multi-party elections.

- Mexico should ensure that farmers are able to buy and sell land, improve efficiency, and find a market for their crops.

- Mexico should hold down government spending by rooting out waste and corruption in existing programs.

Future 3 is based on the following beliefs

- The only path to economic development is through the acceptance of the free-market economic system and participation in the global marketplace.
- Thanks to rising levels of education, technological development, and political maturity, Mexico is ready to build a society based on the rule of law and fair, multi-party elections.
- Mexico's long-term interests lie in linking our country with the United States and the other nations of the developed world.

PROS

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Accepting the economic principles and legal standards of the developed world will help Mexico to attract foreign investment.
2. Establishing a society based on the rule of law will strengthen the confidence of Mexicans in their own economy and encourage them to invest their savings here at home.

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3. Linking Mexico's future to the United States and other developed countries will give Mexico a greater voice in the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and other important international organizations.

CONS

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Continuing the rapid pace of economic change will deepen Mexico's poverty and fuel the crime and disorder that threaten to destroy our society.
2. Tying Mexico's trade and finances to the United States will make our country more vulnerable than ever to the pressure of Washington.
3. Opening Mexico up to unrestrained foreign investment will allow outsiders to snatch up our country's most vital industries, such as oil and transportation.
4. Rushing toward democracy will deepen our country's divisions and eventually pit one group against another in violent conflict.

Focusing Your Thoughts

Instructions: You have had an opportunity to consider three Futures for Mexico. Now it is your turn to look at each of the Futures from your own perspective. Try each one on for size. Think about how the Futures address your concerns and hopes. You will find that each has its own risks and trade-offs, advantages and disadvantages. After you complete this worksheet, you will be asked to develop your own Future for Mexico.

Ranking the Futures

Which of the Futures below do you prefer? Rank the Futures, with "1" being the best Future for Mexico to follow.

___ **Future 1: Justice for the People**

___ **Future 2: Restore Order and Stability**

___ **Future 3: Embrace the Future**

Beliefs

Rate each of the statements below according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support 3 = Oppose 5 = Undecided
2 = Support 4 = Strongly Oppose

___ To move forward, Mexico must first overcome its history of injustice and exploitation.

___ Mexico has an opportunity to eventually join the ranks of the developed nations if our country holds steady to the course of reform.

___ Closing the gap between the rich and the poor in Mexico is more important than achieving high rates of economic growth.

___ Rapid change threatens to plunge Mexico into chaos and violence.

___ Linking our country closely to the United States is the surest route to prosperity for Mexico.

___ Democracy is a worthy goal only to the extent that it puts power in the hands of the common people.

___ The United States seeks only to take advantage of Mexico's weaknesses.

___ The free-market economic system and democracy are the only realistic options available to poor countries seeking to advance.

___ A strong, central government is Mexico's best bet for promoting stability and prosperity.

Creating Your Own Future

Your next assignment is to create a Future that reflects your own beliefs and opinions. You may borrow heavily from one Future, or you may combine ideas from two or three Futures. Or you may take a new approach altogether. There are, of course, no perfect solutions. And there is no right or wrong answer. Rather, you should strive to craft a Future that is logical and persuasive. Be careful of contradictions. For example, you should not propose raising trade barriers to protect Mexican industries if you believe that NAFTA is crucial to Mexico's development.

Suggested Reading

Bartra, Roger. *The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992). 199 pages.

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Oppenheimer, Andres. *Bordering on Chaos: Guerrillas, Stockbrokers, Politicians, and Mexico's Road to Prosperity* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996). 367 pages.

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Publications List

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project develops curricula for high schools and colleges on current foreign policy issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens. All units incorporate the work of academics and policymakers from a range of perspectives and are classroom tested prior to publication. A new unit is published every three months during the academic year, and all units are updated regularly. For current information on new titles and revisions, call the Choices Education Project at (401) 863-3155 or visit the project on the World Wide Web at *http://www.brown.edu/Research/Choices/.*

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CHOICES FOR THE 21st CENTURY

Caught Between Two Worlds:
Mexico
At The Crossroads

ALTERNATIVES FOR PUBLIC DEBATE
AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

A program of the Thomas J. Watson Jr.
Institute for International Studies

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads was developed by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project staff with the assistance of the research staff of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, scholars at Brown University, and several other experts in the field. We wish to thank the following researchers for their invaluable input:

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Vikram Chand, *Visiting Scholar in International Relations (Research)*
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Gustavo Vega, *Associate Professor, Centro de Estudios Internacionales*
El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico City

To Nancy Soukup, editorial associate at the Watson Institute, we extend additional thanks for editing this unit.

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads is part of a continuing series on current foreign policy issues. A new unit is published every three months during the academic year, and all units are updated regularly.

CHOICES

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September 1996

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The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project is a program of the **Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies** at Brown University.

Thomas J. Biersteker
Director

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The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project is a program of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University. Choices was established to help citizens think constructively about foreign policy issues, to improve participatory citizenship skills, and to encourage public judgment on policy priorities.

The Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies was established at Brown University in 1986 to serve as a forum for students, faculty, visiting scholars, and policy practitioners, who are committed to studying global problems and developing international initiatives to benefit society.

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About the Choices Approach

Choices for the 21st Century curricula are designed to make complex international issues understandable and meaningful for students. Using an innovative approach to student-centered instruction, Choices units develop critical thinking and civic judgment — essential ingredients of responsible citizenship.

Understanding the Significance of History: Each Choices unit provides students with a thorough introduction to the topic under consideration. Students gain an understanding of the historical background and the status of current issues. In this way, they see how history has shaped our world. With this foundation, students are prepared to thoughtfully consider a variety of perspectives on public policy.

Exploring Policy Alternatives: Each Choices unit is built around a framework of alternative policy options that challenges students to consider multiple perspectives and to think critically about the issue at hand. Students are best able to understand and analyze the options through a cooperative learning/role-play activity. In groups, students explore their assigned options and plan short presentations. The setting of the role-play may be a Congressional hearing, meeting of the National Security Council, or an election campaign forum. Student groups defend their policy options and, in turn, are challenged with questions from their classmates. The ensuing debate demands analysis and evaluation of the many conflicting values, interests, and priorities reflected in the options.

Exercising Civic Judgment: Armed with fresh insights from the role-play and debate, students are challenged to articulate original, coherent policy options that reflect their own values, priorities, and goals as individuals and citizens. Students' views can be expressed in letters to Congress or the White House, editorials for the school or community newspaper, persuasive speeches, or visual presentations.

Why Use the Choices Approach? Choices curricula are informed by current educational research about how students learn best. Studies have consistently demonstrated that students of all abilities learn best when they are actively engaged with the material rather than listening passively to a lecture. Student-centered instructional activities motivate students and develop higher-order thinking skills. However, some high school educators find the transition from lecture format to student-centered instruction difficult. Lecture is often viewed as the most efficient way to cover the required material. Choices curricula offer teachers a flexible resource for covering course material while actively engaging students and developing skills in critical thinking, persuasive writing, and informed citizenship. The instructional activities that are central to Choices units can be valuable components in any teacher's repertoire of effective teaching strategies. Each Choices unit includes student readings, a framework of policy options, suggested lesson plans, and resources for structuring cooperative learning, role-plays, and simulations. Students are challenged to:

- recognize relationships between history and current issues
- analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives on an issue
- understand the internal logic of a viewpoint
- engage in informed debate
- identify and weigh the conflicting values represented by different points of view
- reflect upon personal values and priorities surrounding an issue
- develop and articulate original viewpoints on an issue
- communicate in written and oral presentations
- collaborate with peers

Teachers who use Choices units say the collaboration and interaction that take place are highly motivating for students. Opportunities abound for students to contribute their individual talents to the group presentations in the form of political cartoons, slogans, posters, or characterizations. These cooperative learning lessons invite students to take pride in their own contributions and the group product, enhancing students' self-esteem and confidence as learners. Choices units offer students with diverse abilities and learning styles the opportunity to contribute, collaborate, and achieve.

Note to Teachers

Geographical proximity has in many respects muddied our country's understanding of Mexico. The 2,000-mile border we share with our neighbors to the south suggests that Mexico is open and accessible to Americans (or, as Mexicans would say, "North Americans"). In fact, it marks a cultural chasm as pronounced as anywhere in the world. The common frontier, the growing popularity of salsa in the United States and hamburgers in Mexico, and the upsurge in trade resulting from NAFTA have masked the stark differences separating the two societies. Mexico's historical experience, cultural heritage, and economic development have combined to create a nation that is often impenetrable to the American mind.

Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads seeks to bring Mexico's evolving national identity into sharper focus for American high school students. Unlike most units of the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project, *Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads* is not written from the U.S. perspective. Rather, students are asked to see the world through Mexican eyes and to contemplate current Mexican choices in the areas of economic development, political reform, and foreign relations.

At the core of the unit are three distinct directions, or Futures, for Mexico in the coming years. Each Future is grounded in a clearly defined philosophy about Mexico's place in the world and offers broad guidelines on fundamental Mexican public policy issues. By exploring a spectrum of alternatives, students gain a deeper understanding of the values and assumptions competing for the allegiance of the Mexican people.

The background reading prepares students to assess Mexico's policy choices. Part I introduces students to the conflict and drama of Mexican history through a historical survey extending from the pre-Columbian period to the financial crisis of 1982. Part II analyzes the ramifications of the economic reforms Mexico has undergone since 1982. Lastly, Part III explores the most pressing public policy challenges facing Mexico today.

Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan: The Teacher's Resource Book accompanying *Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads* contains a day-by-day lesson plan and student activities. The unit opens with an analysis of the recent controversy revolving around the revision of elementary school history textbooks in Mexico. The next lesson centers on Mexico's rich tradition of mural painting to introduce students to the concerns of individual Mexicans. The third and fourth days of the lesson plan involve students in a simulation in which they act as advocates for the three Futures or take on the role of Mexican voters. On the fifth day, students apply their own policy recommendations for Mexico to pressing constitutional issues. You may also find the "Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan" useful.

The lesson plan offered for *Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads* is a guide. Many teachers choose to devote additional time to certain activities. We hope that these suggestions help you in tailoring the unit to fit the needs of your classroom.

Integrating This Unit into Your Curriculum

Units produced by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project are designed to be integrated into a variety of social studies courses. Below are a few ideas about where *Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads* might fit into your curriculum.

Latin America: Mexico occupies a unique position in Latin America. Its rich pre-Columbian past, *mestizo* heritage, long border with the United States, and revolutionary legacy have set it apart from the rest of Latin America. At the same time, Mexico's size and economic development have thrust the country into a leadership position in the region. The other nations of Latin America both look toward and are affected by their northern neighbor. From the Chiapas rebellion to monetary policy, Mexico's agenda is crowded with issues that are vital to Latin America's future. *Caught between Two Worlds: Mexico at the Crossroads* offers a springboard for a broader study of the challenges facing the region in the 21st century.

Economic Reform in the Developing World: Mexico has long been a pacesetter among the countries of the developing world. From 1940 to 1980, its protectionist trade policies and emphasis on import substitution seemed to offer a middle course between Soviet-style communism and American capitalism. Much of the Third World looked at Mexico's steady economic growth with admiration and envy. In the 1980s, Mexico blazed a new trail, this time in the direction of free-market reform. Mexico's technocrats dismantled their country's old economic system with a speed that left international business leaders and economists spinning. As Mexico recovers from its latest financial crisis, much of the world is drawing lessons from the Mexican experience.

Trade Policy: In the past decade, Mexico has rushed into the global marketplace at a gallop. Most significant has been the implementation of NAFTA. The agreement represents the most ambitious effort yet to bring down trade barriers between developing and developed countries. It also affords an opportunity to evaluate the impact of free-trade policies on a rapidly industrializing country. The opening of Mexico's economy has recast the rules for Mexican business leaders, while workers and peasants face a new era of uncertainty. Meanwhile, new markets have opened for Mexican exporters. What the coming years hold will have repercussions for international trade relations that extend well beyond the NAFTA bloc.

Democratization of One-Party Political Systems: No political party in the world has held onto power longer than the PRI. For decades, the PRI's ability to co-opt opponents and build consensus made the party a model of authoritarian stability. Today, however, the PRI's control is unraveling and voices for democratization are growing louder. Civil society has taken root outside the party structure while electoral reform has undercut the PRI's monopoly on power. At the same time, corruption, drug lords, and economic crisis could block Mexico's path to democracy. How Mexico's political system evolves holds great import for the development of democracy throughout Latin America.

Digging Deeper into Mexican History

Objectives:

Students will:
- Analyze the significance of history in the identity of Mexicans today.
- Draw parallels between historical events and current issues.
- Compare the historical interpretations of two Mexican history textbooks.

Required Reading:

Before beginning the unit, students should have read Part I of the background reading and completed "Study Guide — Part I."

Suggestions:

Because Part I of the background reading is both lengthy and challenging, consider giving students more than one night to complete it. An optional study guide, "Organizational Chart — Part I" (page 6), has been included to help students deepen their understanding of Mexican history.

Handouts:

- "The Struggle for Mexico's Past" (page 7-8).

In the Classroom:

1. *Understanding the Mexican Worldview* — Explain that Mexicans have traditionally viewed their history as an ongoing drama pitting heroes against villains. Ask students how the official ideology that emerged after the Mexican Revolution contributed to this interpretation. Who are the most prominent heroes and villains according to this mindset? How does the Mexican view compare to the interpretation of history in the United States?

2. *Comparing Historical Interpretations* — Distribute "The Struggle for Mexico's Past." Review the background to the textbook controversy, calling on students to assess the role of Porfirio Diaz in Mexican history. Instruct students to read the first excerpt and to share their answers to the discussion questions. Focus particular attention on the third question. In what respects does the excerpt reflect the philosophy of the Echeverria administration? Instruct students to read and respond to the second excerpt, again focusing on the implications for Mexican policy today.

3. *Rethinking the Past* — Call on students to apply the contrasting perspectives of the two excerpts to other crucial junctures in Mexican history. Instruct them to review Part I of the background reading to flesh out their responses. For example, how would the old and new textbooks differ in interpreting the Spanish conquest? The independence struggle? The presidency of Benito Juarez? The Mexican Revolution? The reforms of Lazaro Cardenas?

4. *Postscript* — Note that the Mexican government ultimately backed away from issuing the revised textbooks. Instead, Zedillo invited scholars from throughout Mexico to submit a new round of revisions for the 1993-94 school year. Winning entries were selected by an independent panel of judges. Nonetheless, the controversy was not resolved. Zedillo blocked the publication of several textbooks chosen by the panel, insisting that substantial revisions were required. In the case of the fifth-grade social sciences textbook, the furor that had arisen from the treatment of the 1968 student massacre and the 1988 elections in the 1992 draft was avoided altogether by concluding the history in 1964. Mexican education officials maintained that their country needed more time to digest the events of the past three decades.

Homework:

Students should read Part II of the background reading and complete "Study Guide — Part II."

Name:

Study Guide — Part I
Understanding Mexican History

1. What are the main forces of change in Mexico today?

2. U.S. society is held together largely by shared political values. How does Mexican society differ from the United States in this respect?

3. Why does Cortes' conquest of the Aztec empire continue to be a source of tension in Mexico today? Why is the term "Malinche" considered an insult in present-day Mexico?

4. Why is Mexico's struggle for independence from Spain often viewed as a failed revolution?

5. Why did the reforms of Benito Juarez mark a key turning point in Mexican history?

6. What were the main achievements of the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz? How did Diaz's rule lead to the Mexican Revolution?

7. How did the goals of Emiliano Zapata differ from those of Venustiano Carranza in the Mexican Revolution? Which set of goals had prevailed by 1920?

8. How did Alvaro Obregon and Plutarco Elias Calles restore order to Mexico?

9. Why were the reforms of Lazaro Cardenas seen by many as the fulfillment of the Mexican Revolution?

10. How did the PRI contribute to the stability of Mexican society? In what ways did it open the door to greater corruption?

11. How did the discovery of new oil deposits lead to Mexico's 1982 financial crisis?

Name:

Organizational Chart — Part I
Understanding Mexican History

Instructions: This worksheet is designed to help you gain a firmer understanding of Mexican history. As you will see, the three historical periods match the three main headings in Part I of the background reading. Your assignment is to identify the leading figures and decisive events that shaped the three periods.

	Leading Historical Figures	Decisive Events
1519-1809 (Violent Birth)		
1810-1909 (From New Spain to Mexico)		
1910-1982 (Revolution and Modernization)		

The Struggle for Mexico's Past

As you learned in Part I of the background reading, Mexicans take their history seriously. That attitude was clearly illustrated in 1992-93 when a national controversy erupted over the revision of Mexico's elementary school history textbooks.

Unlike in the United States, the government issues a standard set of textbooks for Mexican students. Before the latest round of revisions, Mexican elementary school students were using social studies textbooks that were written in the early 1970s under the administration of President Luis Echeverria.

Ernesto Zedillo, who was the minister of education under President Carlos Salinas, pledged to modernize Mexico's educational system. He felt that the old textbooks reflected a viewpoint that ran counter to the economic reforms that had begun in 1982. Zedillo hired a handful of leading historians to revise the textbooks, encouraging them to place new emphasis on historical periods that previously had been overlooked.

Zedillo's team of historians devoted greater attention to Mexico's colonial era and the rule of Porfirio Diaz. The revised text tackled the 1968 massacre of student demonstrators for the first time, but did not mention that the government had ordered troops to attack the demonstrators. The revised text also praised the economic reforms of the Salinas administration while passing over the fraud that took place in Mexico's 1988 presidential elections.

The revisions set off a firestorm of protest in Mexico. Critics charged that the Salinas government was trying to shape history to fit its own agenda. They argued that the revised textbooks were an attempt to water down the spirit of the Mexican Revolution. In response, Zedillo asserted that the revised textbooks presented a more balanced picture of key historical figures, rather than casting them as heroes or villains.

The most heated controversy revolved around the treatment of Porfirio Diaz. The following two passages from the sixth-grade social sciences textbook highlight the most important revisions. Read them carefully and answer the "Questions for consideration."

Excerpt #1 — 1970s textbook

In 1877, Porfirio Diaz occupied the presidency for the first time and proposed to pacify and modernize the nation; to achieve that, he repressed all popular demonstrations against him and jailed his political enemies, thus establishing the so-called "Porfiriana peace" or "peace of the sepulcher" and converting his government into a dictatorship.

As for the economy, Diaz gave concessions to foreigners — principally English and North Americans — so they would invest capital in our country. As a result, the most important branches of the national economy were in the hands of foreigners, at a cost to the majority of Mexicans who were displaced from management positions and could only work as employees or peons.

Diaz governed for more than 30 years. In this period...the dominant class was made up of large landowners...industrialists, bankers, and businessmen, while the majority of the population were peasants without land and workers who lived in deplorable conditions.

Name:

Questions for consideration

1. According to the excerpt from the old textbook, what were the most important developments during the rule of Porfirio Diaz?

2. Based on the excerpt, what is your overall impression of the Diaz regime?

3. What position do you think the author of the excerpt would take on the general direction of Mexico's current economic policy?

Excerpt #2 — Revised textbook (chapter summaries)

The long government of Porfirio Diaz achieved pacification of the country through alliances with different groups and interests. A good administration achieved economic recuperation and attracted foreign investment that sparked economic development. The negotiation of the foreign debt allowed the government to nurture the economy and normalize relations with creditor nations. Culture flourished, and there were good historians, painters, and poets.

The railroads were one of the principal means of economic development during the Porfiriato. The railroad made contact between previously isolated regions, allowed the circulation of men and merchandise, diminished the costs of transportation, and promoted the export of Mexican products.

The long government of Porfirio Diaz created a climate of peace and promoted the economic development of the country. This government diminished individual liberties, concentrated power in a few hands, and halted the development of democracy.

Questions for consideration

1. According to the excerpt from the revised textbook, what were the most important developments during the rule of Porfirio Diaz?

2. How does the perspective of this excerpt toward the Diaz regime differ from that of the first excerpt?

3. What position do you think the author of the excerpt would take on the general direction of Mexico's current economic policy?

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Expressing Political Views through Art

Objectives:

Students will:
- Analyze the relationship between art and politics in 20th century Mexico.
- Explore the styles and techniques of Mexico's leading muralists.
- Express the political views of individual Mexicans through art.

Required Reading:

Students should have read Part II of the background reading and completed "Study Guide — Part II."

Handouts:

- "Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico" (pages 11-15) for the six small groups.
- "Mexican Perspectives" (pages 16-17) for the six small groups.

In the Classroom:

1. Art and Politics — Divide the class into six groups. Distribute "Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico" to each group. Explain that Mexico's mural tradition gained international attention in the 1920s and 1930s. Ask students to identify the distinguishing features of the Mexican school. How do the murals of Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros compare to the artwork of their contemporaries in Europe and North America? Review each example of artwork individually. Call on students to assess the artist's use of form, symbolism, and perspective. For example, what is the meaning behind the flattened images in Rivera's *Death of a Capitalist*. Invite students to comment on the relationship between style and content within each painting.

2. Defining Roles — Emphasize that the connection between politics and art remains strong in present-day Mexico. Opponents of the government are more likely than ever to express their criticism through elaborate banners and sidewalk drawings in the central plazas of Mexico's large cities. Distribute "Mexican Perspectives" to each group. Note that the handout presents profiles of six Mexicans coping with their country's recent changes. Assign a profile to each group. Explain that the groups are expected to draw a small-scale mural that conveys the hopes and concerns of the individual they have been assigned.

3. Spurring Creativity — Encourage students to take another look at the artwork in "Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico" to develop ideas for their murals. Urge them to discuss the profiles they have been assigned before they begin drawing. What events have shaped the attitudes of the profiled Mexicans toward their country? What are the scenes and figures that dominate their lives? What would they wish to say through their murals to passers-by about Mexico today? Call on students to offer suggestions for visually expressing abstract concepts. For example, how might they illustrate faith in collective action or exalt the power of the individual? Note that on Day Three, one member of each group will be responsible for explaining the content of his or her group's mural to the class.

Homework:

Students should complete their small-scale murals, read Part III of the background reading, and complete "Study Guide — Part III."

Name:

Study Guide — Part II
Mexico's Free-Market Revolution

1. Why did Mexico's 1982 financial crisis lead to a larger role for the IMF in the Mexican economy?

2. What were the main elements of Mexico's free-market reform program in the 1980s?

3. In what ways did the development of NAFTA mark a sharp break with Mexican economic policy after the revolution?

4. Evaluate Mexico's economic performance in the early 1990s. What were the most encouraging developments? What were the key signs of trouble?

5. Why did Carlos Salinas neglect to address the problems of the Mexican economy in 1993 and 1994?

6. How has Ernesto Zedillo responded to Mexico's 1994 financial crisis? Why have his policies won praise from the United States and other developed countries?

Politics and the Paintbrush in Modern Mexico

Art and politics have been closely connected in Mexico, especially since the Mexican Revolution. The struggle and ideals of the revolution gave rise to a generation of muralists who sought to tell the story of Mexico through their paintbrushes. Foremost among them were Jose Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros shared a strong commitment to justice and equality for Mexico's poor. Their work was designed to speak to ordinary Mexicans, many of whom could not read. Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros pioneered a style of large-scale murals that emphasized bold, vibrant colors and heroic themes. Their murals dramatized the turning points of Mexican history, particularly the revolutionary period. Mexican governments after the revolution promoted the muralist movement as a unifying force. The walls of many of Mexico's most important public buildings served as giant canvases for the muralists. The following pages feature examples from the work of Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros, as well as brief biographies of the artists.

Jose Clemente Orozco (1883-1949)

At the early stage of his career, Orozco used his artistic talent to illustrate the poverty of Mexico City and support the Mexican Revolution. Public criticism forced Orozco to leave Mexico from 1917 to 1920. When he returned, the new government of President Alvaro Obregon was eager to sponsor his work. By the mid-1920s, Orozco had developed a sweeping, highly political style. Criticism, however, again forced Orozco abroad. From 1927 to 1934, he pursued his career in the United States and won international recognition. Orozco returned to Mexico a national hero. For the last fifteen years of his life, he was given free rein to explore a variety of themes. Many of Orozco's later murals reflect his fascination with Mexico's Indian past.

Right: *American Civilization — Hispanic America* (1932) represents one half of Orozco's view of civilization in the New World. Its companion mural, *American Civilization — Anglo America* accentuates order and conformity. In contrast, *Hispanic America* is a place of chaos and corruption. Collapsed buildings and greedy officials fill the background of the mural, while at the center stands the defiant figure of Emiliano Zapata. Orozco, however, suggests that the ideals of the rebel leader are about to be struck down by a North American general and his Mexican allies.

Diego Rivera (1886-1957)

Rivera began developing his artistic talent during fourteen years of study and work in Spain and France. Although Rivera was a friend of Pablo Picasso and other post-modernist artists, he turned away from the abstract style of the era. Instead, Rivera's painting came to be dominated by powerful, stark forms. After returning to Mexico in 1921, Rivera was commissioned to paint large murals at several prominent public buildings in the capital. He created elaborate scenes with simple, flattened figures. Rivera's murals relied on precise outlines and strong colors to convey the artist's message.

Above: *Death of a Capitalist* (1928) is one of a series of murals that focus on the theme of revolutionary justice. Rivera took an uncomplicated, idealized approach to illustrating the revolution. The figures in the series of murals are portrayed as either heroes or villains. Rivera believed that Mexico's peasants were the soul of the country and that Mexican society could be transformed through their honesty and resolve.

David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974)

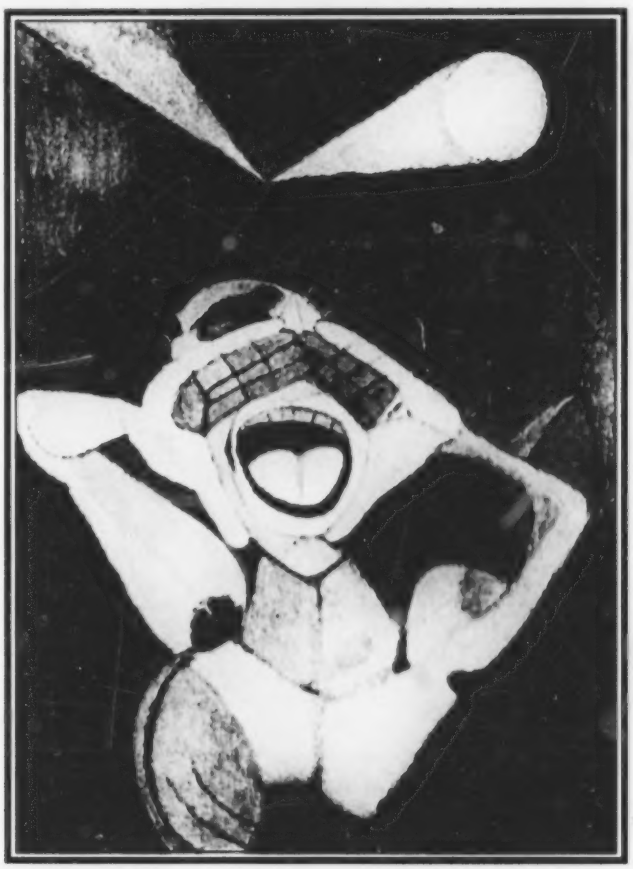
Siqueiros was consumed by politics from his youth. In 1913, he interrupted his artistic education to join the army of Venustiano Carranza during the Mexican Revolution. After studying in Europe, Siqueiros returned to Mexico in 1922. For the next five decades, he was both an active member of the Communist Party and one of Mexico's most productive muralists. Siqueiros' work portrayed the impact on the poor of the industrial and political revolutions of the modern age. His designs stressed movement and vigor, often with a narrow range of colors. Siqueiros commonly used a paint gun to speed up his work.

Above: *From the Dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz to the Revolution* (1957-65) represents Siqueiros' effort to bring history alive in the present. *The Revolutionaries*, shown here, is but one of many huge panels that tell the story of Mexico's revolutionary struggle. One side of the mural depicts the armed peasants and political leaders who led the revolution, while the other side presents the forces opposed to change. At the center, a North American businessman and a Mexican political leader grapple for control of the Mexican flag. Siqueiros believed that North American business interests were an ongoing threat to Mexico's independence.

The mural continues to be central to Mexican art, especially as a vehicle for expressing political opposition to the government. Mexican artists today, however, have gone well beyond the themes and styles of Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros.

Rufino Tamayo (1899-1991)

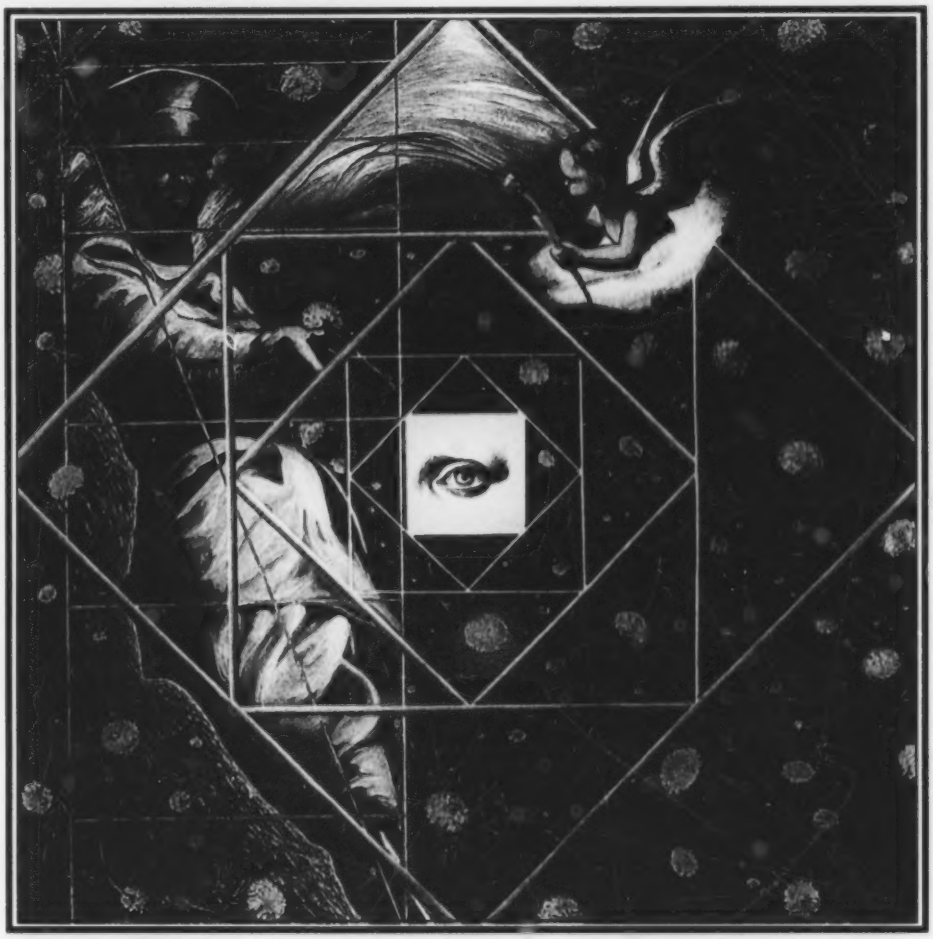
Tamayo was the first prominent Mexican artist to challenge the approach of the great muralists. After beginning a traditional artistic education in Mexico City, Tamayo turned toward the study of Indian art. At the same time, he rejected the huge proportions and blunt political messages of Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros. Tamayo worked primarily on small canvases. His themes were Mexican, although his style was closer to the Cubist and Surrealist painting of Europe. By the 1950s, Tamayo had earned international praise and was commissioned to design murals in Mexico, the United States, and France. He and his work have been especially influential among recent generations of Mexican artists.



Above: *El Grito* represents Tamayo's effort to recast the rallying cry *("el grito")* of Miguel Hidalgo in modern terms. Tamayo was deeply affected by World War II, especially the scientific advances that had produced the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945. Through *El Grito*, Tamayo seems to be calling out from the Mexican night for answers about the direction of humanity.

Politics and art today

Artists in Mexico today are more likely to turn their talents against the government than toward glorifying the revolution. The massacre of student demonstrators in Mexico City in 1968, for example, sparked an artistic outcry against the government. More recently, artists have focused on corruption, the Chiapas rebellion, and economic troubles. Many have also been part of the international "pop art" trend, adapting the styles of comic books, advertising, and other forms of popular culture to their own work.



Above: In *Structures*, Javier de la Garza turns his paintbrush against the history of authoritarian rule in Latin America. A soldier aiming his gun dominates the massive canvas. However, the presence of the unblinking eye and the tiny angel suggests that injustice cannot escape attention. The flowers scattered throughout the canvas remind the observer of the Day of the Dead in Mexico, when flowers are laid neatly around tombstones.

Mexican Perspectives

Instructions: The profiles* presented below are designed to put a human face on the problems and challenges of today's Mexico. Your group will be assigned one of the profiles. You will then be expected to draw a small-scale mural that expresses the concerns of your assigned individual. Carefully study the profile you have been assigned with your fellow group members before beginning your mural. On Day Three, one member of your group should explain the message of your mural to the rest of the class.

Josefina Valenzuela

Josefina lives in an industrialized area on the northwestern outskirts of Mexico City. A river in her neighborhood runs black with sludge from factory waste. To support her 12-year-old daughter and mother, Josefina works six days a week as a maid. For twelve hours of cleaning and cooking, she earns about $11 a day, or nearly four times the minimum wage. Josefina travels up to two hours by bus, subway, and mini-van to reach the affluent neighborhoods where her clients live. Despite her daily struggle, Josefina takes pride in her accomplishments. When her family arrived in Mexico City from Puebla in the 1950s, they built their first house from cardboard and tin cans. Josefina left school after three years of primary education and has been working ever since.

"For certain, you can't sit around waiting for political parties or political leaders to rescue you, to change your life. You can only do that for yourself. And the only way you can do that is by working harder....I have no confidence that the people in power tell us the truth. I see their lies with my own eyes."

Bernardo Navarro

Although Bernardo is the son of a wealthy industrialist, he has been determined to achieve success on his own. After working for several companies, Bernardo began manufacturing specialized electronic equipment, such as high-performance microphones and amplifiers. When President Carlos Salinas brought down Mexico's trade barriers, Bernardo's firm was well-positioned to adjust to the global marketplace. Bernardo had already formed a partnership with a Japanese company in his field. By the late 1980s, he was importing parts from Japan for his line of products, rather than producing everything himself. His costs have gone down and the quality of his equipment has increased, but Bernardo has been forced to cut his work force by half. While his own company has prospered, Bernardo blames Salinas' trade policy for the decline of Mexico's consumer electronics industry.

"With a little more discussion and planning, the borders could have been opened, the economy could have been streamlined, and so many domestic industrialists would not have been ruined....They [government officials] just want to follow what it says in the textbooks: you know, you have to open the borders because that's what the formula tells you to do."

Ramon Ortega

Ramon farms eight irrigated acres of fertile land on an *ejido* in Guanajuato. For most of his life, Ramon grew corn and beans, the traditional crops of Mexico. He also relied on a local middleman to loan him money and sell his crops. In the mid-1970s, however, he began growing high-risk cash crops. With financial help from his children, Ramon planted marigolds for a local producer of chicken feed. The profits enabled him to buy a small tractor and a used pickup truck. When international food processing companies opened plants in Guanajuato in the early 1980s, Ramon turned to cauliflower, broccoli, and cucumbers. The companies provide him with fertilizers, insecticides, and high-yield seedlings on credit. Only a few of the *ejido* farmers have been able to meet the demanding standards of the international companies, but Ramon has succeeded.

"Any day of the week, the big companies may decide to go elsewhere. Or they may decide they don't want to contract with someone like me who is working a small ejido *plot. But one thing they can't do to me now is to take away from me what I know about growing cash crops, because I've got it all up here, in my head."*

*The profiles are drawn from *Mexican Lives*. Copyright © 1994 by Judith Adler Hellman. Published by The New Press.

Conchita Gomez

Conchita lives in a new settlement on the fringes of Mexico City. She recently started a small business in her neighborhood, reselling women's underwear that she buys in bulk in Mexico City's main commercial district. She also volunteers at a local cooperative to prepare meals for 400 poor children. Conchita's service entitles her to free food for her own family. In addition, Conchita's husband, who works illegally in California, occasionally sends money to her. Conchita is most proud of her community involvement. She has helped organize her neighbors to gain government recognition for her settlement. Over the years, Conchita's community has pressured the government to introduce roads, water, electricity lines, schools, and other basic services.

"Ordinary people here in Mexico are not going to be well-nourished until we have a government that works for everyone and not just for the rich. I had more hope when I thought that Cuauhtemoc Cardenas would become our president. But although most Mexicans voted for him, the PRI just wouldn't turn over power to anyone else....The funny thing is that now the priistas *[officials of the PRI] have finally noticed San Miguel Teotongo and have started to respond to the demands we have been making all along."*

Martin Calderon

Martin oversees a large-scale farming operation on 1,500 acres in Guanajuato. Much of the land he farms is owned by others, allowing Martin to operate within Mexico's limits on land ownership. Martin and his family supply international food processing companies in the region with a variety of vegetables. In addition, they export herbs and speciality crops directly to Europe and the United States. Most recently, the family has begun producing chemical fertilizers and assembling agricultural machinery from imported European parts. Martin is a strong supporter of NAFTA and President Carlos Salinas' reform of Mexico's land ownership laws. He believes that the new measures, which secured the property rights of landowners, will spur investment in agriculture. He also feels that NAFTA will open new markets for him in the United States.

"NAFTA gives us fantastic opportunities because Mexico is blessed with so many advantages in climate, primary material, and the cheap manpower needed for labor-intensive agricultural processes....We bring in two harvests during the same winter months when North American fields are dormant. To be sure, many growers are going to have to shift from grains, which are cultivated more efficiently in the United States and Canada, to winter fruits and vegetables. But the opportunities to expand in horticultural products are almost limitless."

Adelita Sandoval

Twelve years ago, Adelita left her abusive husband in Michoacan and moved her five children north to Tijuana. For the next six years, she worked in a variety of *maquiladoras* near the U.S. border, doing everything from stitching pants to soldering circuit boards. Layoffs, chemical fumes, or exhausting working conditions drove her from job to job every few months. Adelita's marriage to Hector opened a new door for her. Hector's income as a waiter and enrollment in Mexico's social security system meant greater financial security for Adelita and her children. Through Hector's cousin, Adelita found work in San Diego cleaning houses. For three days a week as a maid Adelita earns about $200 — nearly four times her full-time weekly wage at the *maquiladoras*. Although inflation has limited their ability to save money, Adelita and Hector eventually hope to open their own restaurant in downtown Tijuana.

"It seems like half my life has been spent trying to get to the other side. The funny side is that I didn't come here thinking I would work in the United States. I came to Tijuana to find a job in the maquiladoras*....But after I'd lived and worked in Tijuana a few years, I got the picture: you can work hard and get paid in pesos, or you can work hard and get paid in dollars."*

Role Playing the Three Futures: Organization and Preparation

Objectives:

Students will:

- Analyze the issues that frame the debate on the direction of Mexico's reform.
- Identify the core values of the Futures.
- Integrate the arguments and beliefs of the Futures and the background reading into a persuasive, coherent presentation.
- Weigh the ramifications of the Futures from a Mexican perspective.
- Work cooperatively within groups to organize effective presentations.

Required Reading:

Students should have read Part III of the background reading and completed "Study Guide — Part III."

Handouts:

- "Presenting Your Future" (page 20) for the Future groups.
- "Expressing Key Values" (page 21) for the Future groups.
- "Speaking for the Mexican Electorate" (page 22) for the voter groups.

In the Classroom:

1. Sharing Student Murals — Call on group spokespersons to present the small-scale murals they developed on Day Two. Invite students to compare the contrasting perspectives.

2. Getting Started — In order to save time in the classroom, form student groups before beginning Day Three. During the class period of Day Three, students will be preparing for the Day Four role play. Remind them to incorporate the background reading into the development of their presentations and questions.

3a. Future Groups — Form three groups of four students. Assign a Future to each group. Distribute "Presenting Your Future" to the three Future groups. Inform students that each Future group will be called upon in Day Four to present the case for its assigned Future to a group of Mexican voters. Explain that Future groups should follow the instructions in "Presenting Your Future." Note that the Future groups should begin by assigning each member a role.

3b. Voter Groups — Divide the remainder of the class into six smaller groups and distribute "Speaking for the Mexican Electorate" to each group. Assign each of the voter groups one of the profiles outlined in "Mexican Perspectives." (In smaller classes, individual students should be assigned voter roles.) While the Future groups are preparing their presentations, members of the voter groups should develop questions to be directed to the Future groups on Day Four. Each voter group should prepare at least five questions for each of the Futures. (See "Speaking for the Mexican Electorate.") Remind voter groups that they are expected to turn in their questions at the end of the simulation.

Extra Challenge:

Ask the Future groups to design campaign posters illustrating the best case for their Futures. Voter groups may be asked to design a political cartoon expressing their concerns.

Homework:

Students should complete preparations for the simulation.

Name: _____

Study Guide — Part III
Identifying the Challenges Ahead

1. How have Mexico's economic reforms weakened the power of the PRI?

2. Many Mexicans believe that their country is on the road to full democracy. Others predict increasing instability. What is your assessment of Mexico's political future?

3. Why do many Mexicans believe that NAFTA has hurt their country's economy? What types of businesses have benefited from NAFTA?

4. How has Mexico's relationship with the United States changed in recent years?

5. How does drug trafficking threaten Mexico's political stability?

6. What were the main causes of the 1994 uprising in Chiapas? How did Mexico's economic reforms contribute to the rebellion?

Presenting Your Future

Preparing Your Presentation

Your Assignment: Your group is scheduled to appear before a gathering of Mexican voters. Your assignment is to persuade the voters that your Future should serve as Mexico's guiding philosophy in the coming years. (Elections for Mexico's chamber of deputies are scheduled for 1997. In 2000, Mexicans will choose a new president.) You will be judged on how well you present your Future.

Organizing Your Group: Each member of your group will take a specific role. Below is a brief explanation of the responsibilities for each role.

1. *Spokesperson:* Your job is to explain the position of your group to the voters in a three-to-five minute presentation. In preparing your presentation, you will receive help from the other members of your group. You should include arguments from their areas of expertise. Keep in mind, though, that you are expected to take the lead in organizing your group. Read your Future and review the background reading to build a strong case for your Future. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

2. *Economic adviser:* Your job is to tell the spokesperson of your group why your Future is justified from an economic standpoint. You should draw on the lessons of Mexico's economic transformation since the early 1980s to support your position. Read your Future, paying close attention to the references to economic policy, and then review the sections of the background reading (especially Part II) that deal with your area of expertise. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

3. *Political adviser:* Your job is to tell the spokesperson of your group why your Future is justified from a political standpoint. You should draw on your understanding of Mexico's current challenges to support your position. Read your Future, paying close attention to the references to Mexico's political system, and then review the sections of the background reading (especially Part III) that deal with your area of expertise. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

4. *Historian:* Your job is to tell the spokesperson of your group why your Future is justified from a historical standpoint. You should draw on lessons from Mexico's history to support your position. Read your Future, paying close attention to references to Mexico's past, and then review the sections of the background reading (especially Part I) that deal with your area of expertise. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

Making Your Case

After your preparations are complete, your spokesperson will deliver a three-to-five minute presentation to the gathering of Mexican voters. The "Expressing Key Values" worksheet and other notes may be used, but the spokesperson should speak clearly and convincingly. During the presentation, you should try to identify the weak points of the other Futures. After all of the groups have presented their Futures, the voters will ask you questions. Any member of your group may respond during the question-and-answer period.

Expressing Key Values

The notion of values lies at the core of this unit. Each of the three Futures in this unit revolves around a distinct set of values. The opening two paragraphs of your Future are devoted to making a convincing case for the values that are represented. The term "values," however, is not easy to define. Most often, we think of values in connection with our personal lives. Our attitudes toward our families, friends, and communities are a reflection of our personal values.

Values play a critical role in political decisions as well. In the United States, our country's political system and foreign policy have been shaped by a wide range of values. The high value many Americans place on freedom, democracy, and individual liberty rings loudly throughout U.S. history. In the 20th century especially, government policy has often promoted the values of stability, security, cooperation, and equal opportunity. Some values fit together well. Others are in conflict. Americans are constantly being forced to choose among competing values in our ongoing debate about public policy.

In today's time of rapid change, the people of Mexico face similar challenges. Mexicans share many of the same values we espouse. Other fundamental Mexican values, such as concern for historical traditions and promotion of economic equality, are less commonly held by Americans. Your job is to identify and explain the most important values of your Future. These values should be clearly expressed by every member of your group. This worksheet will help you organize your thoughts.

1. What are the two most important values underlying your Future?

   a.

   b.

2. According to the values of your Future, what should be the main goals for Mexico's economic development?

3. Why should the values of your Future be the guiding force for setting Mexico's course?

Speaking for the Mexican Electorate

Your Role

Your group has been called upon to express the concerns of one of the six individuals profiled in "Mexican Perspectives." Speaking for your assigned voter, you will take part in a forum for Mexican congressional and/or presidential candidates. (Elections for Mexico's chamber of deputies are scheduled for 1997. In 2000, Mexicans will choose a new president.) You will hear about three distinct political philosophies, or Futures, for Mexico in the coming years. You are expected to evaluate each of the Futures from the perspective of the voter your group has been designated to represent.

Your Assignment

Your group should prepare at least five questions for each Future from the perspective of your assigned voter. The questions should reflect the values, concerns, and interests of your assigned role. For example, an appropriate question about Future 1 from Josefina Valenzuela would be:

> *How do you plan to limit government corruption while at the same time giving the government more power over the economy?*

On Day Four, the three Future groups will present their positions. After their presentations are completed, you will have an opportunity to address some of your questions to the Future groups. At the end of the activity, you will be expected to turn in your questions.

Role Playing the Three Futures: Debate and Discussion

Objectives:

Students will:

- Articulate the leading values influencing Mexico's future.
- Explore, debate, and evaluate multiple perspectives on Mexico's future.
- Sharpen rhetorical skills through debate and discussion.
- Cooperate with classmates in staging a persuasive presentation.

In the Classroom:

1. Setting the Stage — Organize the room so that the Future groups face the voter groups.

2. Managing the Simulation — Explain that the simulation will begin with three-to-five minute presentations by the spokespersons for the Future groups. Encourage the spokespersons to speak clearly and convincingly.

3. Guiding Discussion — Following the presentations, invite members of the voter groups to ask questions. Make sure that each voter group has an opportunity to ask at least two questions. The questions should be evenly distributed among all three Future groups. If time permits, encourage members of the Future groups to challenge the positions of other groups. During cross-examination, allow any Future group member to respond. (As an alternative approach, permit questions after each Future is presented.)

Suggestions:

To increase participation in the simulation, instruct students to record the most persuasive arguments presented by the Future groups.

Homework:

Students should read each of the three Futures, then moving beyond these Futures they should fill out "Focusing Your Thoughts" and complete "Mexico's Future."

Charting Mexico's Future

Objectives:

Students will:

- Articulate a coherent political program for Mexico based on personally held values and historical understanding.
- Compare and contrast values and assumptions with classmates.
- Offer reasoned arguments to support policy recommendations.
- Apply individual views to pressing constitutional issues in Mexico.

Required Reading:

Students should have read the three Futures, and completed "Focusing Your Thoughts" and "Mexico's Future."

Handouts:

- "Reassessing the Principles of the Mexican Revolution" (pages 27-28).

In the Classroom:

1. Analyzing Beliefs — Call on members of the voter groups to share their evaluations of the Future groups. Which arguments were most convincing? Which beliefs were most appealing? Review the beliefs in "Focusing Your Thoughts," noting the relationship between beliefs and Futures.

2. Drawing Connections — Display the small-scale murals that were designed on Day Two. Call on students to draw connections between the murals and the three Futures. Invite students to share their own Futures. Which values are featured most prominently? Which problems receive the most attention?

3. Reforming the Revolution — Distribute "Reassessing the Principles of the Mexican Revolution." Review Part I of the handout with the class, emphasizing the significance of Article 27 as a symbol of the Mexican Revolution. Call on students to answer the first two discussion questions. Ask them to respond to the third question from the perspective of their individual Futures. Encourage them to evaluate the pros and cons of Salinas' amendment. Why do critics of the agricultural reform warn that the changes will harm Mexico's peasants? Why do proponents of the reform believe that it is a step toward improving the efficiency of Mexican agriculture?

4. Applying Student Futures — Review Part II of the handout, stressing the sensitivity of the provisions of Article 27 dealing with natural resources. After discussing the first two follow-up questions, ask students to imagine that they are advisers to Mexico's president. Based on their own Futures, students should offer responses to the third question. Urge them to debate the advantages and disadvantages of privatizing Mexico's oil and petrochemical industries. What are the implications of student recommendations for other issues facing Mexico? What other reforms would students suggest? Finally, call on students to step back from their Futures to reflect on their understanding of Mexico. How did the unit affect their attitudes toward Mexico?

Extra Challenge:

As homework, suggest that students use their responses to "Mexico's Future" as the basis for developing a broader political platform.

Name: _____

Focusing Your Thoughts

Instructions: You have had an opportunity to consider three Futures for Mexico. Now it is your turn to look at each of the Futures from your own perspective. Try each one on for size. Think about how the Futures address your concerns and hopes. You will find that each has its own risks and trade-offs, advantages and disadvantages. After you complete this worksheet, you will be asked to develop your own Future for Mexico.

Ranking the Futures

Which of the Futures below do you prefer? Keep in mind that the beliefs you support most strongly should guide your choice. Rank the Futures, with "1" being the best Future for Mexico to follow.

___ **Future 1: Justice for the People**

___ **Future 2: Restore Order and Stability**

___ **Future 3: Embrace the Future**

Beliefs

Considering the statements below will help you complete the worksheet "Mexico's Future." Rate each of the statements according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support 3 = Oppose 5 = Undecided
2 = Support 4 = Strongly Oppose

___ To move forward, Mexico must first overcome its history of injustice and exploitation.

___ Mexico has an opportunity to eventually join the ranks of the developed nations if our country holds steady to the course of reform.

___ Closing the gap between the rich and the poor in Mexico is more important than achieving high rates of economic growth.

___ Rapid change threatens to plunge Mexico into chaos and violence.

___ Linking our country closely to the United States is the surest route to prosperity for Mexico.

___ Democracy is a worthy goal only to the extent that it puts power in the hands of the common people.

___ The United States seeks only to take advantage of Mexico's weaknesses.

___ The free-market economic system and democracy are the only realistic options available to poor countries seeking to advance.

___ A strong, central government is Mexico's best bet for promoting stability and prosperity.

Creating Your Own Future

Your next assignment is to create a Future that reflects your own beliefs and opinions. You may borrow heavily from one Future, or you may combine ideas from two or three Futures. Or you may take a new approach altogether. There are, of course, no perfect solutions. And there is no right or wrong answer. Rather, you should strive to craft a Future that is logical and persuasive. Be careful of contradictions. For example, you should not propose raising trade barriers to protect Mexican industries if you believe that NAFTA is crucial to Mexico's development.

Name:

Mexico's Future

Instructions: In this exercise, you will offer your own recommendations for Mexico. Imagine that you are drafting a campaign speech for a candidate in Mexico's 1997 congressional elections. Your responses to "Focusing Your Thoughts" should help you identify the values of your Future.

1. What should be the main principles guiding Mexico's economic development?

2. What should be the main principles underlying Mexico's political system?

3. How will Mexico change over the next ten years if your Future is adopted?

4. What are the two strongest arguments supporting your Future?

   a.

   b.

5. What are the two strongest arguments opposing your Future?

   a.

   b.

Reassessing the Principles of the Mexican Revolution

Part I

The proclamation of the 1917 Mexican Constitution is viewed as the most lasting achievement of the Mexican Revolution, and nowhere does the spirit of the revolution speak more loudly than in Article 27. As you will read, Article 27 gave the government the authority to take land away from large estates and distribute it to traditional agricultural villages, or *ejidos*. *Ejido* farmers had the right to work the land, but the Mexican government retained ownership. Below is an excerpt from Article 27.

> The Nation shall at all times have the right to impose on private property such limitation as the public interest may demand...to ensure a more equitable distribution of public wealth. With this end in view, necessary measures shall be taken to divide up large landed estates; to develop small landed holdings in operation; to create new agricultural centers, with necessary lands and waters....Centers of population which at present either have no lands or water or which do not possess them in sufficient quantities for the needs of their inhabitants, shall be entitled to grants thereof, which shall be taken from adjacent properties, the rights of small landed holdings in operation being respected at all times...
>
> Centers of population which lack communal lands (*ejidos*) or which are unable to have them restored to them due to lack of titles, impossibility of identification, or because they had been legally transferred, shall be granted sufficient lands and waters to constitute them, in accordance with the needs of the population...
>
> The area or individual unit of the grant shall hereafter be not less than ten hectares [24.7 acres] of moist or irrigated land, or in default of such land its equivalent in other types of land...
>
> Landowners affected by decisions granting or restoring communal lands and waters to villages, or who may be affected by future decisions, shall have no ordinary legal right or recourse...
>
> In each State, Territory, or the Federal District, there shall be fixed a maximum area of land of which a single individual or legally constituted corporation may be the owner. The excess over the fixed area shall be subdivided by the owner within the time fixed by the local law, and these parcels shall be offered for sale under terms approved by the governments...

By the time President Carlos Salinas came to office, Mexico's *ejido* system was struggling. The average *ejido* plot was about 10 acres. Few of Mexico's 4 million *ejido* farmers made use of modern technology. Overall, Mexico was producing only about two-thirds of its food needs. Salinas sought to improve the efficiency of Mexican agriculture. In December 1991, he won approval of several controversial amendments to Article 27. The main reforms are summarized below.

- *Ejido* farmers are allowed to form partnerships with other farmers. They may also rent or sell their land.
- Private companies or individuals, both foreigners and Mexicans, have the right to buy or manage land. Although no individual may own more than 100 hectares (247 acres) of irrigated land, associations of farmers or private companies may own up to 2,500 hectares (6,178 acres) of irrigated land. (The maximum for other types of land is higher.)
- The government no longer has the right to redistribute land.

Name:

Questions for consideration

1. Why was Article 27 considered one of the most important accomplishments of the Mexican Revolution?

2. How did the goals of Salinas' free-market reforms conflict with the principles of Article 27? (Identify passages from the excerpt on page 27 to support your answer.)

3. Salinas' amendment of Article 27 has sparked harsh criticism. Some argue that the reforms will force millions of small farmers off the land while enriching large landowners and agribusiness companies. Others claim that the 100-hectare maximum on land ownership will continue to limit the efficiency of Mexican agriculture. Based on your Future, what policy would you recommend on this issue?

Part II

In addition to agriculture, Article 27 also addressed the issue of Mexico's natural resources. As you will read in the excerpt below, the Mexican government laid claim to the country's oil, minerals, and other natural resources through Article 27.

> In the Nation is vested the direct ownership of all natural resources of the continental shelf and the submarine shelf of the islands; of all minerals or substances, which in veins, ledges, masses or ore pockets, form deposits of a nature distinct from the components of the earth itself, such as the minerals from which industrial metals and metalloids are extracted; deposits of precious stones...solid mineral fuels, petroleum and all solid, liquid, and gaseous hydrocarbons...
>
> Only Mexicans by birth or naturalization and Mexican companies have the right to acquire ownership of lands, waters, and their appurtenances, or to obtain concessions for the exploitation of mines or of waters. The State may grant the same right to foreigners, provided they agree before the Ministry of Foreign Relations to consider themselves as nationals in respect to such property, and bind themselves not to invoke the protection of their governments in matters relating thereto...

Questions for consideration

1. Why did the authors of the Mexican Constitution consider the excerpt above central to the goals of the revolution?

2. Why do critics of Article 27 argue that the excerpt above has held back the development of Mexico's energy and mining industries?

3. Even Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo have backed away from privatizing the oil and petrochemical industries. Why do these sectors of the economy represent such a sensitive area. Based on your Future, what would you recommend for the direction of Mexico's oil and petrochemical industries?

Alternative Three-Day Lesson Plan

Day 1: See Day Two of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan. (Students should have read Part II of the background reading and completed "Study Guide — Part II" before beginning the unit.)
Homework: Students should read Part III of the background reading and complete "Study Guide — Part III" as homework.

Day 2: Assign each student one of the three Futures, and allow a few minutes for students to familiarize themselves with the mindsets of the Futures. Call on students to evaluate the benefits and trade-offs of their assigned Futures. How do the Futures differ in their overall philosophies? Ask students to respond to a current issue, such as Zedillo's economic reforms, unrest in Chiapas and Guerrero, or the direction of NAFTA? Moving beyond the Futures, ask students to imagine they are Mexican voters. Which values should guide Mexico's economic development and political reform? Which issues should be at the top of Mexico's public policy agenda?
Homework: Students should complete "Focusing Your Thoughts" and "Mexico's Future."

Day 3: See Day Five of the Suggested Five-Day Lesson Plan.

Making Choices Work in Your Classroom

Like the art of cooking, cooperative group learning is a skill that is rarely perfected on the first attempt, either by teachers or students. Yet with careful preparation, guidance, and practice significant gains can be made quickly. No single recipe guarantees success with cooperative learning or the Choices approach in every classroom. That would be impossible, since each classroom differs in its organization and size, and its unique collection of personalities and needs. However, this section of the Teacher's Resource Book offers a variety of ingredients for teachers to use as they adapt Choices curricula to their classrooms. The suggested ingredients that follow have been drawn from educational research on student-centered instruction and, more important, from the experiences of teachers who have used Choices curricula successfully in their classrooms over the past six years. Educators who have questions about using Choices curricula in their classrooms are encouraged to contact the Choices Education Project in writing, or by calling (401) 863-3155. The Choices staff includes experienced classroom teachers who will be pleased to speak with you.

Designing Cooperative Learning Groups

Group Size: The key to successful cooperative group work is having a group assignment that is complex enough to require the participation of all group members. Planning the size and composition of working groups in advance is crucial to the successful use of Choices curricula. Research indicates that the ideal size for a cooperative learning group is four or five students. This is certainly the ideal size for group assignments in Choices units. When using Choices units in larger classes, the size of option (or, in the case of this unit, Future) groups may be expanded to six or seven students. However, it is important to keep in mind that whenever the number of students in a group is increased, the number of roles and expected outcomes must also be expanded.

Group Composition: A strength of cooperative learning is that it creates opportunities for students to work together in new combinations on challenging tasks. Cooperative learning not only requires the academic skills of reading, writing, and critical thinking, but the interpersonal skills of communication, negotiation, and problem-solving. In most cases, this style of instruction and learning is most effective when students are assigned to groups by the teacher rather than being allowed to work with their friends. While random group selection can be effective, in most classes successful group composition requires that the teacher consider the personalities, strengths, and needs of the students.

Groups comprised of students with diverse strengths, talents, and needs are ideal. For example, artistic students might be assigned to different groups to share their talents and perspectives, while less verbal students could be placed in groups with more outgoing students to help draw them into the lesson. Whenever possible, teachers should try to prevent one student from dominating a group. Explaining the instructions, roles, and ground rules for cooperative learning (see below) helps prevent this. Teachers may choose to group aggressive students with each other, leaving room in other groups for less assertive students to emerge as leaders. Finally, even though the negotiation of roles among the students in a group can be a valuable part of the cooperative learning experience, teachers might choose to assign certain roles, such as group spokesperson, in order to encourage leadership from more reticent students and to keep more aggressive students from dominating.

Students may initially complain about being assigned to groups that do not include their closest friends. We have found that, at the conclusion of the assignment, they will usually express satisfaction with their assigned partners, recognize that they got more accomplished, and sometimes even acknowledge the start of new friendships. The additional time involved in planning group size and composition will pay off when students are actively engaged, debating, and thinking critically.

Preparing Students for Cooperative Learning

Provide Clear Written Instructions: As with any assignment, students benefit from instructions and guidelines that clearly outline expectations and how they will be accomplished. These should be given to students in writing and reviewed with the class. Afterwards, as questions arise within groups, students should refer to the written instructions and attempt to answer each other's questions before asking for the teacher's assistance.

Establish Ground Rules: Especially when cooperative learning is a new experience, students benefit from the establishment of ground rules that are explained before groups are formed. Ground rules must be kept simple, and should be designed to keep students involved and on task. Posting these rules in a prominent place in the classroom can be very effective. An example of simple but effective ground rules for the cooperative group assignments could be:

Everybody has a role (or a job)
Everybody participates
Nobody dominates
Nobody interrupts

These rules can be enforced by appointing one student to serve as the group manager. The teacher can make it clear that one of the group manager's responsibilities is to enforce the ground rules as the group explores its assigned option and prepares its presentation. The group manager might also be required to make sure that members of the group stay on task and attempt to solve problems before asking for the teacher's assistance. Ground rules that are clear and used consistently can, over time, become an integral component of the classroom, facilitating learning and keeping students on task.

Managing the Choices Simulation

Recognize Time Limitations: At the heart of the Choices approach is the role-play simulation in which students advocate different options, question each other, and debate. Just as thoughtful preparation is necessary to set the stage for cooperative group learning, careful planning for the presentations and debate can increase the effectiveness of the simulation. Time is the essential ingredient to keep in mind. A minimum of 45 to 50 minutes is necessary for the presentations and debate. Hence, if only one class period is available, student groups must be ready as soon as class begins. Teachers who have been able to schedule a double period or extend the length of class to one hour report that the extra time is beneficial. When necessary, the role-play simulation can be run over two days, but this disrupts the momentum of the debate. The best strategy for managing the role-play is to establish and enforce strict time limits, such as five minutes for each option presentation, ten minutes for questions and challenges, and the final five minutes of class for wrapping up the debate. It is crucial to make students aware of strict time limits as they prepare their presentations.

Highlight the Importance of Values: During the debate and debriefing, it is important to highlight the role of values in the options. Students should be instructed to identify the core values and priorities underlying the different options.

Moving Beyond the Options

As a culminating activity of a Choices unit, students are expected to articulate their own views of the issue under consideration. An effective way to move beyond the options debate to creating individual options is to have students consider which values in the options framework they hold most dear. Typically, students will hold several of these values simultaneously and will need to prioritize them to reach a considered judgment about the issue at hand. These values should be reflected in their own options and should shape the goals and policies they advocate.

Adjusting for Large and Small Classes

Choices units are designed for an average class of twenty-five students. In larger classes, additional roles, such as those of newspaper reporter or member of a special interest group, can be assigned to increase student participation in the simulation. With larger option groups, additional tasks might be to create a poster, political cartoon, or public service announcement that represents the viewpoint of an option. In smaller classes, the teacher can serve as the moderator of the debate, and administrators, parents, or faculty can be invited to play the roles of congressional leaders. Another alternative is to combine two small classes.

Applying Choices to Ability-Grouped Classes

Choices curricula are developed with the majority of high school students in mind. Choices units are not designed solely for students in honors or advanced placement programs. Nor are they designed specifically for students in remedial classes. However, the units are designed to be flexible enough for high school teachers to adapt for *any* classroom, and they have been used successfully in all kinds of classes. The Choices staff places confidence in the ability of teachers to decide which units are best suited for the courses and students they teach. The following suggestions may assist teachers of higher- and lower-ability classes in adapting Choices curricula to meet the needs of their students.

Lower-Ability Classes: It would be a mistake to believe that the Choices approach is too difficult for students in lower-ability classes. Teachers report that, with certain adaptations, Choices units can motivate higher levels of student participation, thinking, and confidence in lower-ability classes. Feedback from classroom teachers indicates that the following strategies lead to success with Choices in these classes:

- Maintain high expectations for student learning and thinking.
- Classes of all abilities do a better job with Choices the second or third time the approach is used. Skills in collaboration, communication, and critical thinking improve with practice.
- Some units are easier than others because the necessary background is particularly accessible. Use one of these first to give the students some experience with the approach.
- To make background readings more manageable, some teachers have students read aloud in class, stopping to discuss or clarify key points. Other teachers substitute shorter readings from the textbook or another source as background reading.
- Key concepts from the background can be explained in a mini-lecture format.
- Students can review and keep track of the important terms in a unit by creating their own glossary for reference throughout the unit.
- An extra day for review of the background, for group preparation, or for the development of individual options can be very worthwhile.

Higher-Ability Classes: Choices units have much to offer students in higher-ability and advanced placement classes. Students are challenged to understand the internal logic of different arguments and to extrapolate from these while playing the role of advocate. Two-week Choices units are especially rich in historical background, and they highlight the complex relationships among nations through many eras. Choices units on historical topics typically include a wealth of primary source documents for students to read and analyze. These documents can help to prepare students in advanced placement classes for the "Document Based Questions" included on advanced placement examinations. Extra challenge assignments are included in many lesson plans, and every Choices unit includes suggestions for additional reading and research.

Assessing Student Achievement

Grading Group Assignments: Research suggests that it is counterproductive to give students individual grades on cooperative group assignments. A significant part of the assignment given to the group is to cooperate in achieving a common goal, as opposed to looking out for individual interests. Telling students in advance that the group will receive one grade often motivates group members to hold each other accountable. This can foster group cohesion and lead to better group results. It may be useful to note that in addition to the cooperative group assignments, students complete individual assignments as well in every Choices unit.

Requiring Self-Evaluation: Having students complete self-evaluations is an extremely effective way to make them think about their own learning. Self-evaluations can take many forms and are useful in a variety of circumstances. They are particularly helpful in getting students to think constructively about group collaboration. In developing a self-evaluation tool for students, teachers need to pose clear and direct questions to students. A sample Group Project Self-Evaluation is included on the following page. Each student should complete his/her own evaluation as part of the unit. Two key benefits of student self-evaluation are that it involves students in the assessment process, and that it provides teachers with valuable insights into the contributions of individual students and the dynamics of different groups. These insights can help teachers to organize groups for future cooperative assignments.

Evaluating Student Options: The most important outcomes of a Choices unit are the original options developed and articulated by each student. These will differ significantly from one another, as students identify different values and priorities that shape their viewpoints. These options cannot be graded as right or wrong, but should be evaluated on clarity of expression, logic, and thoroughness. Did the student provide reasons for his/her viewpoint along with supporting evidence? Were the values clear and consistent throughout the option? Did the student identify the risks involved? Did the student present his/her option in a convincing manner?

Testing: In a formal evaluation of the Choices approach, it was demonstrated that students using Choices learned the factual information presented as well as or better than students who were taught in a more traditional lecture-discussion format. However, the larger benefits of the Choices approach were evident when students using Choices demonstrated significantly higher ability to think critically, analyze multiple perspectives, and articulate original viewpoints, compared to students who did not use this approach. Teachers should hold students accountable for learning historical information, concepts, and current events presented in Choices units. However, a simple multiple-choice examination will not allow students to demonstrate the critical thinking and communication skills developed through the Choices unit. If teachers choose to test students, they may wish to explore new models of test design that require students to do more than recognize correct answers. Tests should not replace the development of student options.

For Further Reading: Cohen, Elizabeth G. *Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986).

Group Project Self-Evaluation

1. What did you contribute to this project?

2. List the names of your partners and briefly comment on each person's contributions.

3. What things went well within your group?

4. What problems did you encounter? How did you attempt to resolve these problems?

5. If you had this assignment to do over again, with the same partners, what would you do differently?

6. Overall, what grade do you think your group deserves on this assignment? Explain your response.

Publications List

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project develops curricula for high schools and colleges on current foreign policy issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens. All units incorporate the work of academics and policymakers from a range of perspectives and are classroom tested prior to publication. A new unit is published every three months during the academic year, and all units are updated regularly. For current information on new titles and revisions, call the Choices Education Project at (401) 863-3155 or visit the project on the World Wide Web at *http://www.brown.edu/Research/Choices/*.

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